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Islam and its struggle ... extremism ... p.14

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When fridges die p.12

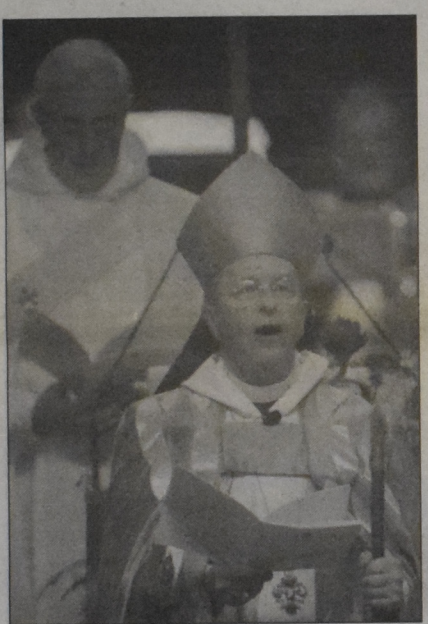
Conservative Episcopalians form 'church within church'

Episcopalians disturbed by last summer's consecration of an openly gay bishop formed a church within a church for theologically orthodox members at a meeting in Plano, Texas on Jan. 20. A founding charter for the group, called the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes, was signed by about 100 delegates, mostly from 12 dioceses around the US.

The group vowed to work within the 2.3 million-member Episcopal Church (ECUSA) but plan to defy liberal church leaders and vie for control of parishes and dioceses.

"This has been, for us, a glorious and historic day," said Pittsburgh Bishop Robert Duncan, elected as network leader after delegates gave the governing charter unanimous approval. "What we have done today will bear fruit for years to come in the lives of our children and grandchildren." Under the charter, the network's core will be the 12 dioceses in nine states that sent delegates to the Plano meeting, although approval is still needed from the dioceses involved.

"We encourage bishops and dioceses to read our charter and consider joining us in our Great Commission ministry," said Bishop Duncan. "There is now no reason for orthodox Episcopalians to leave Anglicanism."



Bishop Gene Robinson after his consecration

The network as the true church

The charter says recent decisions by the Episcopal Church "have departed from the historic faith and order and have brought immense harm." But it pledged that the group will "operate in good faith within the constitution of the Episcopal Church" and "constitute a true and legitimate expression of the worldwide Anglican Communion."

The leaders of the new network contend that they are not the dissidents but that present church leaders left the Anglican communion when they began allowing gay clergy and blessings for same-sex couples. The Preface to the theological statement of the network states that the recent actions of the Episcopalian Church in the US "have compromised the witness and mission of Anglicans throughout the world, rent the unity of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church U.S.A., torn the fabric of the Anglican Communion, and violated the trust so necessary for the fruitful relations with other churches and other faiths."

Across diocesan boundaries

How the "church within a church" will relate to the denomination's leaders was not explained, but talk of schism was played down during the two-day meeting. Those parishes that formally leave the Episcopalian fold would likely be forced to surrender their properties to the denomination.

But the network's charter says that all congregations joining the group, including those from liberal dioceses, will "come under the spiritual authority of a bishop" approved by network leaders – a direct challenge to the Episcopal Church's top officials.

The sitting bishop of a diocese usually must give a visiting bishop permission to perform such services. A group of "senior bishops" in the network is prepared to aid dioceses even if permission is not granted, the Rev. Martyn Minns, rector of Truro Episcopal Church in Fairfax, said.

A similar structure proposed to deal with dissident conservative churches in the diocese of B.C. was emphatically rejected by the leadership of the Anglican Church in Canada. The presiding Bishop of the US church has repeatedly rejected such proposals in the past. In a letter circulated about three months ago Griswold insisted that while providing pastoral care for dissidents bishops are obligated to "recognize the constitutional and canonical authority of bishops and the geographic integrity of diocesan boundaries."

See page 2 ...

Islamic law (shariah) recognized in Canada

Canada's multicultural approach will be put to the test with the formal recognition of Islamic tribunals that will decide cases according to shariah, Islamic law, the implementation of which has caused so much violence in a country like Nigeria. Such tribunals have been in existence for some time in various ethnic communities in Canada. Now, however, they will be recognized by law.

At a conference in Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada, in October 2003, Muslim delegates elected a 30-member council to establish the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice.

Resort to the Islamic tribunal will be strictly voluntary, just as they are for Jews and aboriginals, who can also have cases arbitrated by arbitrators from their own culture. Muslims who wish to do so may ask the arbitrators, who would be an imam, scholar or lawyer, to settle their differences either by shariah or by Canadian law. Such a court will understand the language and cultural background of the people involved.

Girls wearing headscarves which are banned in French schools

In an article by Judy Van Rhijn for the Vancouver Independent Media Center, Muslim barrister Syed Mumtaz Ali explains that in the past Canadian Muslims have been excused from applying shariah in their legal disputes because it was impractical as there was no way to enforce decisions. However, amendments to the Arbitration Act have made it possible for Muslim committees to enforce settlements.

"Now, once an arbitrator decides cases, it is final and binding," says Syed. "The parties can go to the local secular Canadian court asking that it be enforced."

The ruling of such a tribunal would be binding under Canadian law, provided both parties have agreed it will be so and it does not conflict with Canadian law.

See p. 2...

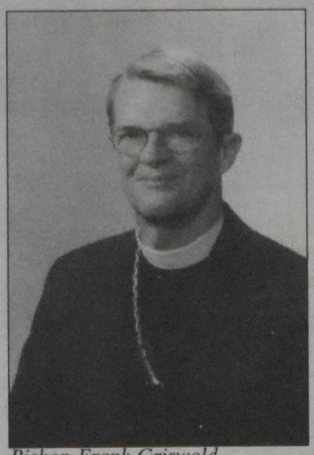
Conservative Episcopalians

...continued from p.1

While conservatives maintain that their actions were approved if not encouraged by the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the symbolic head of the Anglican community, Griswold insists that no such scrambling of jurisdictions was intended.

"I was very disappointed to read the American Anglican Council's strategy statement, which seems to contemplate disobeying canons, going around bishops and seizing property," ECUSA spokesman Dan England said prior to the Plano meeting. "This is, after all, an Episcopal Church. How a plan to circumvent the authority of diocesan bishops fits into that is quite beyond me."

"This [action] gives hope internationally," said the Rev. Don Curran, of Orlando, Fla. "The worldwide Anglican Communion has been waiting for this, has been hopeful for this."



Bishop Frank Griswold

Several Anglican provinces around the world have broken communion with the American church, he pointed out. "And now they are going to have a place to reconnect with the church through this network."

[Harry der Nederlanden with files from The Washington Times, the Associated Press and the BBC.]

Theological rationale

The network has posted a "Confession and Calling" statement on its website (www.anglicancommuniondioceses.org) replete with supportive passages from Scripture. Here are a few excerpts:

"There are times within the history of the church when Christians have been faced with threats, some internal and some external, to the integrity of their common life and faith. The recent actions of the Diocese of New Westminster and the General Convention of the Episcopal Church U.S.A. confront the various provinces of the Anglican Communion with just such a threat to the historic Faith and Order that defines their existence as a communion.

"II.2 We are called because of this to found our communion in Christ on common obedience to God's word which requires of us not pluriformity of truth and practice, but that we be of one mind and follow the pattern of holiness marked out for us by our Lord and his Apostles *(Jn. 17:14 & 17; Phil. 2:2 & 5; I Pet. 2:21; II Pet. 1:20; I Tim. 1:15-16).*

"II.3 We are called therefore to oppose assaults on the authority of the Scriptures. We are also called to oppose assaults on the way of life that the Scriptures enjoin *(1 Tim. 6:3-6).* This opposition comes, not from a divisive spirit, but from the precious vocation to holiness, which leads us away from sin into the clear and obedient participation in God"s own nature *(Lev. 11:44: 20:26; Matt. 5:48: I Pet. 1:14-16; 2 Pet. 1:4).*

"II.4 We are called in our day and place, to oppose all those actions of synods, conventions, individual bishops and priests, that contradict the apostolic and the Church's commonly accepted scriptural teaching on marriage between man and woman as the divinely ordained, holy, and exclusive context of human sexual activity, as the privileged social sacrament of God's covenant of faithfulness for and figure of human redemption *(Hosea 2:16-21; Mark 10:5-9: Eph. 5:29-32; Rev. 19: 7-9),* and on chastity outside of marriage as a holy and worthy calling *(Matt. 19:12; I Cor. 7:32).* Such contradictions of Christian teaching subvert the communion of our churches within the Anglican Communion and rend relationships within the larger Church. In doing this, they represent an attack on the very mysteries of God, the evangelical trust of which we are stewards.

Islamic law

...continued from p.1

Supporters of such tribunals say they reduce the need to go to court, are more private, speed up resolution and keep costs low in civil disputes. Under the system, arbitrators will be better trained in both Canadian law and shariah, said Syed, who is leading the organization of the new institute.

Will it be fair to women?

Will it be truly voluntary for women, however, several Muslim women have asked. Given the status of women in Muslim communities, it is not at all certain that they will be able to withstand pressure to agree to arbitration according to shariah. Although Islamic law is vast and complex and varies greatly from country to country, it does treat women as less than men. For example, Islamic family law provides for a larger share of an inheritance to go to the male heirs, that only husbands may initiate divorce proceedings and that the fathers generally get custody of children.

Tarek Fatah, of the Muslim Canadian Congress, likes the approach in theory, but is afraid it may cause more divisiveness both within the community and without.

"Which interpretation of Islamic family law will be used? In a society like Canada, equality is based on common law," he said. "I also worry that this idea will become the whipping post for all right-wing bigots. A community that is already feeling bewildered will face another set of criticisms."

The 600,000 Muslims of Canada come from many different countries, each of which applies shariah in different ways.

Syed says that Canadian Muslims are obliged to follow shariah and the laws of Canada. "We have a double obligation," he says. "You don't have to be the wisest man to see there will be conflicts."

Comments Elizabeth Kendal of the World Evangelical Alliance: "This is exactly the point. Canada will now have two potentially conflicting systems of law in operation. Now that shariah has been given this legitimacy, will a Muslim (who is supposed to accept shariah as the eternal law of Allah) dare contest the decision of a shariah arbitrator through a secular court? Will the courts dare overturn a decision? If both Muslim parties voluntarily agree (or are "persuaded" to "voluntarily" agree) to abide by the dictates of the shariah arbitrator and not contest the decision, do the courts have the right to intervene to preserve Canadian rights and values? The questions are endless.

[Files from Elizabeth Kendal, researcher and writer for the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Committee, Judy van Rhijn in the Law Times, and stories from the Associated Press.]

Merve Kavakci, Member of Turkish Parliament prevented from serving because of her refusal to remove her headscarf, participates in a discussion.

Clarifying the status of shariah in Canada

Dr. Janet Epp Buckingham, director of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) Centre for Faith and Public Life was asked to clarify the status of shariah in Canada.

"The Law Times newspaper announced on 25 November 2003 that several Islamic groups were in the process of forming an arbitration council in Ontario that would allow Muslims to have their disputes decided in accordance with Shariah law. Under the Arbitration Act, 1991 in Ontario, the decision of an arbitrator may be enforced by the courts. This development has raised questions and concerns.

"Under the Arbitration Act, 1991, people may make an agreement to have any disputes adjudicated by binding arbitration. They can set out the qualifications of the arbitrators and even indicate a particular arbitration group to which they agree. Arbitrators are given broad powers to decide their own jurisdiction and process. They may make any remedy available to a court. Under the Act, an arbitrator's award is enforceable through the courts as though it was a court order. In general, the court will not review or overturn an arbitration decision unless there is an error of law. Con-sidering that the purpose of the Islamic arbitration board is to apply Shariah law, rather than the law of Canada, it is an open question at this point if the courts will overturn decisions that are not in accordance with Canadian law.

"The most important pre-condition of the use of the Islamic Arbitration Board is that it is

Continued on page 3 ...

News

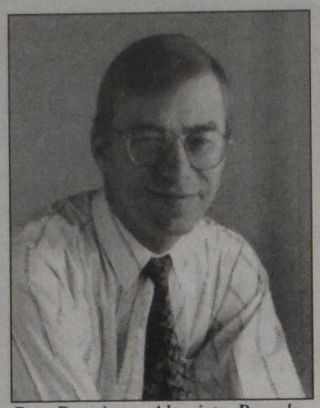
Introducing Altruista – a new and painless way to invest in Christian organizations

Harry der Nederlanden

A group of innovative leaders from the Christian community have come up with a new way to raise funds for the many projects Christians are constantly working to sustain. In the past, we all contributed a certain amount to various charitable organizations and in return the government recognized our charity by permitting us to pay a little less in income taxes.

A number of enterprising individuals from Christian Stewardship Services, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada joined the initiative of the Work Research Foundation to implement a new way to raise capital for Christian organizations. They made the capitalist model of investment work for them. Aren't the institutions created by Christians for various purposes – churches, grade schools, colleges, retirement homes and so on – business ventures too? They may not be created from the profit motive, but they are part of the larger economy, providing jobs and services just as much as the dot.com companies.

In the business world, new enterprises depend on venture capital to get them started. Investors provide start-up funds in the hope that the business will succeed and eventually yield a good return on their investment.



Ray Pennings, Altruista Board of Director.

'Why not use that model for charitable organizations?' the innovators asked themselves.

The need for a new source of capital to assist the growth of the charitable sector was identified by Christian Stewardship Services (CSS) over two years ago, said Henry Eygenraam, Executive Director of CSS. So CSS partnered with the Work Research Foundation, an economic think-tank that developed the concept of using labour-sponsored investment funds as a vehicle for expansion in the charitable sector with the result being the creation of a new company.

That's how the idea for Altruista was born.

"Altruista is a wonderful way for business and charity to work side by side on the creation of social capital," says Bill Winger Director, Administration & Finance for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

As our Christian community ages, there is a growing need for retirement facilities. Where is the money going to come from? Altruista will enable us to invest savings in this sector just as we do in other businesses through mutual funds and other investments.

They will use something called Labour Sponsored Investment Funds, which were created 20 years ago to encourage job-creating ventures. Today, says the brochure created by Altruista, there are over 50 such funds worth about $3.5 million.

Since many of such ventures are rather high risk, they tend to bring quite high returns – when they succeed. Altruista will not, of course, invest in high risk ventures. And it will not, therefore, be able to provide a high return. But it enables investors to put their money into enterprises close to their hearts.

There is, however, a plus built into these funds. Since they were created to stimulate job growth, the government gives investors a tax break on investments up to $5,000. This money must be left alone for 8 years. Federal and provincial governments give a combined tax credit of 30 percent for such an investment. This means that a $5,000 investment costs you between $1179 and $2397, depending on your tax bracket (yes, the rich get richer). The investments will also be eligible for the Registered Retirement Savings Program (RRSP).

In the world of venture capital, of course, the investor hopes that the business he put his money into flourishes and the stock increases in value. That isn't going to happen with an old age home, of course. But it will be a much safer investment and Altruista will aim at paying a modest dividend of 2 percent.

By Altruista's calculations, this means that after 8 years your $5,000 investment will be worth $5734. Not a huge profit, you say. But remember that you received a sizeable tax break on that investment, so that means (if all goes well – and all doesn't always go well) that you will more than double your investment over 8 years. If you calculate from the net after-tax costs of $1943 (for those in the $32-57 thousand tax bracket), the compound rate of return is 24.3%. The results are even better for those in higher tax brackets.

The program has been several months in the making and has received the necessary approvals from the Ontario Securities Commission, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, and the Ontario Ministry of Finance. All investments are reviewed by a board and investment committee of community leaders and by an external agency, Absolute Private Counsel.

Ray Pennings, the chair of the Centre for Industrial Relations Innovation of the Work Research Foundation, is the CEO and president of Altruista. And Henry Eygenraam, Executive Director of CSS (an umbrella organization that assists some 35 charitable organizations), is the Chief Financial Officer of the Fund.

The board of directors consists of: Hank Beekhuis, A. Henry Eygenraam, Patricia Hutten, Martin Mudde, Albert Romkema, Neil Roos, Garry Sytsma, Ray Pennings. If you want further background on these people and more information, go online at www.altruista.ca

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Shariah in Canada

...continued from p. 2

voluntary. It will only have jurisdiction if the parties agree to its use. It is quite possible that if an arbitration decision is not in accordance with Canadian law and one party appeals the decision, the courts would overturn the decision. This arbitration board is being set up under the current Arbitration Act; it is not new legislation that imports Shariah law into Canadian law for any purpose. It appears, therefore, that it will only be effective if the parties agree to it.

"The Law Times article itself makes reference to a previous Islamic dispute resolution board that failed because Muslim women refused to make use of it. It therefore appears that Muslim women are aware of the impact of Shariah law on them. If they refuse to agree to this arbitration board, there is no way that they can be forced to be subject to it.

1. Will these lead to stoning of women for adultery?

The short answer is no. Any two "persons" (which includes corporations) may have their dispute decided by arbitration. Criminal law is not enforced through arbitration.

An arbitrator or board of arbitration may give any remedy that may be given by a court. This does not include remedies such as stoning or any other kind of physical remedy such as incarceration or physical punishment. In addition, the court can substitute a different remedy for that awarded by the arbitrator.

2. Will Muslim women who convert to Christianity lose their children under this arbitration?

This poses the greatest concern. If a woman agrees to arbitration under an Islamic arbitrator either as part of a pre-nuptial agreement, or any other agreement, this can only be changed under the ordinary laws of contract. This means that this agreement will likely be binding (as it is very hard to change this kind of agreement).

On the positive side, the court does have jurisdiction to overturn an arbitration decision if it is "unfair" in law to one party. The courts in Canada are very sensitive to women's rights and it seems unlikely that courts would enforce arbitration awards that give women no rights (custody or access) with respect to their children.

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Editorial

If there are no WMDs in Iraq, did Bush lie?

Harry der Nederlanden

By now it has become clear to all except the most ardent Bushies that the claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, that it was ready to use them and that it was well on its way toward developing nuclear capability was wrong. Yet, the Bush administration presented this as the primary rationale for invading Iraq. It was deemed to be an imminent threat to US security and to its neighbors.

In one sense, the issue is a moot one. The deed has been done, the world is certainly better off without Saddam Hussein, and now it is more important by far to stop the terror in that country and set it on the road toward stable, democratic self-government. If we didn't know it before, by now we know that Saddam was a very bad man indeed – in the same class as Hitler and Stalin – and that the casualties occurring under the US-led occupation are minor compared to those under Saddam's "peacetime" regime.

Since the invasion relieved the world and the Iraqi people of a tyrant who murdered many thousands and who would certainly have murdered thousands more, does it matter that the primary rationale given for the invasion has proved wrong?

It does matter, it seems to me, if as many critics claim, the rationale was trumped up. If it was a lie made up to cover other motives, we have reason to worry. Then it was a lie hatched up by a cadre of highly respectable people, several with Christian convictions, in a democratically elected government. To embrace the idea that the Bush White House put forward a lie to justify the invasion of Iraq is to embrace a deep cynicism about democratic government in general.

It is therefore important not just for the US but for all democratic peoples to reflect on this episode. The absence of WMDs in Iraq, contrary to US claims, is worrisome.

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Spies, lies and weapons

A recent essay published in the *Atlantic Monthly* by Kenneth M. Pollack, who wrote perhaps the most influential book supporting the invasion of Iraq – *The Threatening Storm* – gives a detailed analysis of why the Bush administration's picture of Saddam's military capability was so far off the mark. Pollack's essay is titled "Spies, Lies and Weapons: What Went Wrong."

Pollack points out that the Bush administration wasn't the only one that was misled. The Clinton administration, too, had been convinced of Saddam's danger. Pollack quotes a 2002 document from the highest analytical body in US intelligence: it concluded that Iraq had continued developing WMDs after the Gulf War in defiance of the UN and that it would have nuclear weapons in 5-7 years.

Twenty former weapons inspectors from the UN were pretty much in agreement with that assessment. As were the intelligence agencies of Germany, Israel, Russia, Britain, China and even France. "In sum," says Pollack, "no one doubted Iraq had WMDs."

From evidence gathered so far in Iraq, it seems that Saddam sought to keep alive his capacity to revive the programs he had begun before attacking Kuwait and that he did try to develop missiles capable of striking far beyond the range permitted by the UN treaty. But he did not have WMDs that were an imminent threat to anyone, least of all to the US.

Why then was everyone fooled into overestimating Iraq's military capability? Asks Pollack.

Of all the accounts I've read, his strikes me as the most believable.

In the early 1990s Saddam's regime was busy trying to keep a good part of his WMD programs intact and hidden. However, the inspections were more effective and more sustained than Saddam had anticipated, and he was forced to get rid of them. He did, however, preserve the capacity (the science and technical know-how) to revive them at a later date.

The latter came to light in 1995 from information supplied by defectors. That same year inspectors also discovered that Iraq was still building Scud missiles, that its nuclear program had been far more advanced than previously suspected, and that it had a large biological weapons facility operating in 1990 that was still functional in 1995. Iraq even owned up to the fact.

For various reasons given by Pollack, however, Saddam at last concluded that he was better off appearing to comply with the UN, and he destroyed additional equipment, hiding only the knowledge base necessary to rebuild in the future.

Why didn't he cooperate?

If this is true, why didn't Saddam come clean at that time and cooperate with the UN? Even after 1996 he continued to be defiant and confrontational.

Some believe he pretended to still have WMDs to enhance his prestige among the Arab nations. Pollack, however, believes it was out of fear for internal threats. Both the Kurds and the Shiites had made attempts to oust him and Saddam may have feared that if he no longer had WMDs, they would rise up against him.

Moreover, cooperating with the inspectors would have meant admitting that his course of action had been a mistake and that he had visited great suffering upon his people for no reason.

Meanwhile, the oil-for-food program enabled Saddam to create allies in Russia and France by selling them oil cheap and buying food and medicine at inflated prices. The international outcry against the suffering inflicted by the sanctions also gave him hope that they would soon be lifted or become effectively meaningless.

Some Iraqi scientists say Saddam thought he had a much better WMD program than he actually had because they fooled him. And Saddam may not have cooperated because he feared that the inspections were part of a plan to overthrow him.

Whatever, the reasons for Saddam's further destruction of his WMD programs and his cover-up of that action, everyone outside Iraq missed it. They assumed that Saddam was up to his old tricks

This misperception was deepened by the fact that the intelligence community had been fooled before. To its shock it had discovered that in 1991 Iraq had been only months away from acquiring nuclear capability. Similarly, in 1994 the UN inspectors thought Iraq had been largely disarmed only to discover that they had been badly deceived. So after 1998 analysts were prone to entertain worst-case scenarios when it came to Saddam.

Analysts also had records telling how much WMD material had been imported by Iraq. There was a large discrepancy between what had been imported and what was recorded as destroyed. The logical conclusion was that it was hidden somewhere.

After all, in June of 2000 Saddam declared: If the world tells us to abandon all our weapons and keep only swords, we will do that. We will destroy all the weapons – if they destroy their weapons. But if they keep a rifle and then tell me that I have the right to possess only a sword, then we would say no. As long as the rifle has become a means to defend our country against anybody who may have designs against it, then we will try our best to acquire the rifle."

Too much spin in intelligence?

Another part of the story was how the Bush administration handled intelligence. It distrusted its own CIA analysts, suspecting them of being soft on Saddam. They, on the other hand, were convinced that most of the problems in the Middle East were linked to him. So the White House set up its own intelligence unit, the Office of Special Plans, which "cherry-picked" intelligence, giving attention to reports that painted the worst possible picture of Saddam and ignoring the rest. The reports it passed on to the White House were well-intentioned, says Pollack, but badly flawed, often passing along raw, uncorrected and unqualified intelligence straight to Bush's cabinet. "As best I can tell," concludes Pollack, "these officials were guilty not of lying but of creative omission." As a result, the Bush administration continually entertained only worst-case scenarios about Iraq.

Pollack is glad that Saddam's malign influence in the Middle East has at last been broken and that an evil regime is gone. He reminds us that containment was failing and that the UN's resolve was quickly breaking down. This means that in all likelihood Saddam would have rebuilt his WMD programs and pursued his earlier designs.

But, he concludes, the rush to war in early 2003 was unnecessary and reckless. He makes a number of recommendations, among them that the US administration "admit to the world that it was wrong about Iraq's WMDs and show that it is taking far-reaching action to correct the problems that led to this error."

If democratic countries are to work together to stabilize the international order, they must be able to trust one another to tell the truth. Even if the Bush administration did not deliberately tell lies, for a democracy to work, the people must be able to trust that at least its leaders are doing their best to gather and put the truth before them as fairly as they know how. Without a certain measure of trust, democracy cannot flourish.

Letters

Response to Hielema's article

In his Jan. 19 article Bert Hielema asks, "What's in store for 2004?" He then goes on to make some predictions, and his predictable predictions prompted me to put together a few of my own. Some time in the next year Hielema will:

1. Stop pulling his punches, stop being so cautious and tactful, and will finally unmask George Bush for who he really is – the Devil.

2. Let his faithful readers in on a little secret – while other writers can only report on what people say and do, he can tell us what George Bush is thinking because Hielema is actually psychic.

3. Reveal to us the real reason that George Bush is pro-life – it somehow, in some way, gets America more oil.

4. Write an article about the Ninth Commandment and how it applies to George Bush.

5. Get fired by CC. They'll claim it was because he didn't meet their high journalistic standards, but of course the real reason will be because CC is just another pro-Bush journalistic rag.

Jon Dykstra, Edmonton, Alberta

Comments re: Jan de Bree letter (CC, Jan. 5).

Reading Jan de Bree's letter "Antonides' conviction unsettling" (CC, Jan.5), my mind went from astonishment to indignation.

Many, especially the common Dutch people, saw their German counterparts as their neighbors with whom they had more in common than with those in Britain and France.

Those born in the late 1800's remembered [the German mowers who came to mow] the grass set apart for hay. Work relations often grew into friendship or more. My parents talked about it quite often.

And they had not forgotten the concentration camps invented by the British and used in South Africa for women and children, regardless of Apartheid. And during the 1930's there was work in Germany for unemployed Dutch farmhands. Even the Dutch churches had closer ties with those from Germany than with those of other countries. At least three generations of the Dutch royal family married Germans.

These historical facts made the common man feel closer to the common German. But as soon as the war started, things changed. The vast majority of the Dutch did not welcome collaboration with Germany and certainly not with the National Socialist regime of Hitler.

In 1938 the Dutch Nazi Party held 8 percent of the seats in the lower house, down from the previous 14 percent, I believe. By then Hitler's motives and deeds were better known. Some, but not all, of these people did help the German army.

To top it all off, the statement, "The Dutch government shipped 75 percent of their Jews to German concentration camps," is ridiculous. The Dutch government was in London in exile. It was done on orders from the Germans executed by some bureaucrats and police who collaborated with the enemy.

And do not forget the Jews and their leaders. They were desperate and desolate. They knew their Scriptures and history. They went as sheep to the slaughter, often declining the outstretched helping hand.

The Dutch government before the war did give the Jews who escapted the Nazi terror a safe country to live in until May 1940.

And let us not forget those who risked and often lost their lives or endured torture and prison for helping Jews avoid the concentration camps and gas chambers.

Wiepke (Bill) Wesselius, Whitby, Ontario

Ottawa Citizen
Caglecartoons.com
IT SAYS SOMEONE BY THE NAME 'BUSH' WANTS TO LIBERATE US AND GIVE US SOMETHING CALLED 'DEMOCRACY.'

Regarding the letter by Jan de Bree (CC, Jan. 5).

The writer says that many Dutch people saw Germany as an ally before the invasion of the Netherlands. This may have been true before the First World War, but not for the Second. The NSB (Nazi sympathizers) were a small minority.

The writer also says that the Dutch government shipped 75 percent of Dutch Jews to German concentration camps. That is not true. The Dutch government was in exile in England during the German occupation.

Gerald Rhebergen, Springdale, ON

[Note: The above 'letter' came by phone. Another caller also complained about the use of analogies drawn from the days of Hitler and Germany. An editorial in the National Post recently called for a halt to such comparisons. They generate much heat and little light. Maybe CC ought to ban them too.]

New study finds most teens aren't alienated from their parents' religious beliefs

By Paul Chesser

RALEIGH, N.C. (EP) – Contrary to widespread stereotypes, most American teenagers are not alienated from organized religion, and as many as two-thirds closely agree with the religious beliefs of their parents, according to a new UNC-Chapel Hill study.

The findings released Jan. 13 are part of a four-year research project called the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR).

Data for the study was culled from a national survey of 12th-graders sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. The NSYR analyzed responses to questions on the survey such as "How closely do your ideas agree with your parents" about religion?" and "How good or bad a job is being done for the country as a whole by churches and religious organizations?"

The authors of the study said their findings refute the notion of a "storm and stress" stereotype found in old clinical sampling biases and popular books on youth. They said more recent "solid" studies "of nonclinical adolescent populations…emphasize instead the diversity of adolescents" experiences, the lack of inevitability in any youth outcome, and the relative low levels of intense turmoil in teenagers' lives."

Smith, director of the NYSR, and his coauthors reported that "only about 10 to 20 percent of adolescents manifest severe emotional disturbance," which they said mirrors the adult population. In addition, the sociologists cited other studies which determined that "only between 5 and 10 percent of families see a dramatic decline in the quality of parent-child relationships during the teenage years."

The NYSR analysis of survey responses also found that 67 percent of the sampling of 12th graders said their religious beliefs were mostly similar to those of their parents. Only 21 percent said their beliefs were mostly different or very different from their parents' beliefs.

When asked about the influence and performance of churches in the United States, only 10 percent of the youth surveyed said churches were doing a poor job. Twenty-three percent said churches were doing a fair job, and 49 percent believed they were doing a good or very good job.

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Reflections

CAMPUS CULTURE
Peter Schuurman

A cynical look at Christ

There is a philosophy course at Brock entitled "Western Religious Thought" that has chosen a provocative text to represent the Christian tradition. Burton Mack's *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (1993) makes some wild assertions that ultimately declare "the narrative gospels have no claim as historical accounts." They are rather "myths" he further describes as "imaginative embellishments" and "fictions." The gospel writers, he contends, cleverly describe a crucifixion and resurrection drama that to this day captures the fancy of multitudes. Ultimately, this myth is to blame for the injustices of global imperialism through the ages.

I know the professor who teaches the course, and he said the book was recommended to him so he thought he would try it out as a text. I knew enough about the book to say that I was surprised at the choice, given its speculative core. He then kindly invited me to come to the class and engage its claims. Now I have to do my homework.

What is not new about the book is the idea that there is a common source that Matthew and Luke both drew on in order to write their gospels. This explains why Matthew and Luke both have some identical passages that Mark does not have. This hypothetical source has been called "Q" (from the German "Quelle" meaning "source.")

Speculation as History

This is not such a radical idea, but what is unnerving is that Mack treats Q like an archaeological find rather than academic speculation, as he refers to Q's "discovery." Neither does he mention the numerous other theories that exist to explain the same evidence in a different way. For example, one theory is that Luke used both Mark and Matthew in his writing, and that is why Matthew and Luke share these passages. Mack, however, treats the existence of this never-seen, never-mentioned (in early Christian history) "document" as a taken-for-granted "fact". Moreover, this Q text he declares to be the earliest and most reliable material on the person of Jesus.

He then asserts that this text had a definable community that surrounded it, and adds further conjecture that the community lived in Galilee. He describes three different themes in the text that he claims correspond to three separate chapters in the life of that hypothetical community. One theme he sees flows from the number of anti-establishment sayings. This, he concludes, must be the first stage of the life of the community, and is the most accurate picture of Jesus (referred to as Q1). These pithy aphorisms and clever replies prove Jesus to be a Greek cynic-sage, whose teachings challenged the status quo and whose charisma attracted the crowds. "Love your enemy," says the Jesus teacher. "Don't worry about what you will wear," and "don't judge and you won't be judged."

The apocalyptic references in Q, however, demonstrate a change of mood(Q2). The Jesus group was facing criticism from others, and some members even left the group. So it was necessary to create a theology of judgement that condemned those who were not in the group. Resentment became the fuel for comments that challenged the "love your enemy" ideals, and their former teacher was elevated to a prophet of doom. "Sodom will have a lighter punishment on the day of judgement than that town," says the newly invented Jesus.

The final theme Mack excavates is that of retreat from the world (Q3). Obviously, says Mack, the group was disappointed that the apocalypse was late in coming, so they turned towards a more contemplative existence. They began to imagine Jesus not just as their prophet-teacher, but as some sort of deity. "Authority over all the world has been given to me by my father," says this further embellished Jesus.

As the years pass by, Jesus' stature increases by leaps and bounds in the minds of his followers. The mythmaking had begun, declares Mack, and it only got more elaborate from here, to the point where Jesus was fictionalized as the "Christ." In time, full-fledged narratives had been constructed detailing the torture and execution of the Christ, whose god-man status allowed him to absorb the hatred of those who opposed his movement and rise again from the dead. He then tells his followers to go out to the world and tell everyone to believe in his power and sovereignty.

In summary, Mack's three-layered Q tells us that Jesus was more Greek than Jewish, and documents "a Jesus movement that was not Christian." How does one begin to respond to this, especially when in a context that does not assume the Bible is the trustworthy Word of God, the Christian tradition is a reliable interpreter, and that miracles are possible?

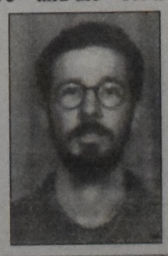
Making God in Our Own Image

It is good to get a fresh look at Jesus and to be roused from the comfortable familiarity that we sometimes breed in our worship. But Mack's book is rife with unsubstantiated claims and wild declarations. Most students will see the book as deeply imaginative, if not outright speculative. One can show the duplicity required to refer to Q as an undisputed "discovery" and the manipulative use of phrases like "scholars say" without any references. Even to call Mack's Q a "gospel" is a misnomer, for his editing leaves one only with "good advice" and not "good news".

Furthermore, it should not be a problem to show how the dichotomy Mack assumes between "history" and "mythology" is a modern creation. Facts and values cannot be compartmentalized so neatly, for all "facts" are theory-laden. All history is interpreted history. Scholars and gospel writers both hold to unproven presuppositions. In other words, Mack embraces a "mythology" of his own: he believes in his own objectivity while dismissing miracle, judgement, and divine revelation without explanation. Such is the disenchanted heart of modernity. In effect, Mack follows the error of the foolish builder in the Q story of Luke 12:42-46.

Albert Schweitzer once said that people who try to reconstruct the "real" Jesus are like a man looking down into a well. He inevitably sees little more than his own face reflecting back at him. I don't know much about Mack, but his Socrates Jesus sounds a lot like a counter-cultural university professor disenfranchised from his own tradition. Because he does not submit himself to anything beyond his own reason and imagination, the book becomes very autobiographical.

Mack is wise enough not to refer to the gospel narratives as a downright lie, but that is essentially his contention. He insists they are fables, fictions, embellishments that have hurt the world with their fanatical dreams of divine intervention. Mack not only overlooks all the beauty, truth and goodness of Christian history, but he fails to answer this one pressing question: why did so many people, in so short a time, come to base their entire lives on these stories? Why did the disciples, having knowingly created such fictions, leave their homes and families to travel around the known world proclaiming resurrected life? Why did they live – and die – for a lie? He does not answer this question, beyond saying that the gospel writers were "geniuses" who knew how to spin a clever story for their times. He claims the truth was suppressed by the first bishops. Funny that he should talk about the suppression of truth.



Peter Schuurman is chaplin at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario

Christian Reformed immigrants:

Review and reminiscences by John Hofstee

"By the ten thousands they left in the second half of the twentieth century from a heavily segmented Netherlands. Especially the Christian Reformed among the emigrants established their own segments in their new countries. Agnes Amelink researched how they fared and what their descendants did with this heritage." ('segmented' = verzuild)

The above quote opens a series of seven articles written by Agnes Amelink and published in the Dutch Christian daily newspaper *Trouw* between Sept. 30 and Nov. 13, 2003 as "Gereformeerde Overzee" (see www.trouw.nl/overzee). Having earlier written a series of articles about the gereformeerden in the Netherlands, she decided to follow up with an account of the experiences of Reformed emigrants to North America.

The segmentation refers to the fact that during the early part of the twentieth century in the Netherlands each segment or religious grouping (*zuil*) developed its own institutions. The Reformed (gereformeerden) had their own political party, the Catholics another and secularists still another. Not only in politics, but also in schools, labor organizations, the press and numerous other levels, each segment or religion had its own associations.

Amelink tells the readers of *Trouw* that when the immigrants reached Canada they began to establish their own Christian institutions as they had in the Netherlands. Early on they began to publish Calvinistic weekly newspapers, among which was *Calvinist Contact* (which later became the *Christian Courier).* As there was no health insurance, a health insurance plan for Christian Reformed immigrants was established. Christian (mainly Christian Reformed) schools were established, the Christian Labour Association of Canada was started, followed later by CPJ (Committee for Public Justice) and the Institute for Christian Studies, which was to provide Christian university and post-graduate studies. Christian University Colleges were established at a later date.

I came to Canada in 1951 at age 15 with my parents and brothers, so I have been part of the developments described by Amelink. We were received by the Christian Reformed Church and most of us remain members of that denomination. When we first arrived we lived out in the country, far away from the church. Of course, we had no car, so we were dependent on our employer to get us to church. But very soon two Christian Reformed churches sent around a bus or van to pick us up and other immigrants like us. We brought our lunches and many new immigrants ate in the church basement between the services. Usually, the afternoon service was conducted in Dutch. The church was not only a spiritual home, it also was a social centre.

Gathering the immigrants

Between 1945 and 1970 about 185,000 Dutch immigrants came to Canada. The largest part of these were gereformeerden, who joined the Christian Reformed Church. Amelink describes why this was so, and her account agrees with my own experience. Prior to the second world war there were only a few Christian Reformed churches in Canada. Starting in 1947 the Christian Reformed Church

Reflections

from Kuyperian Holland to the land of promise

as a denomination recognized that many reformed people were going to immigrate to Canada from the Netherlands. It organized Immigration Societies to help immigrants make the transition, hiring "fieldmen" to find placements for the immigrants and engaging Dutch-speaking ministers to work among the immigrants in Canada, to look after their spiritual needs and also to establish churches. That they were successful in this can be seen in the large number of Christian Reformed Churches that have been celebrating their fiftieth anniversary in the last few years.

In the Netherlands the Christelijke Emigratie Centrale worked mainly among the Gereformeerden and worked with the CRC. Soon the Reformed Church in America established churches as well, and after a few years the Vrijgemaakten, or Art. 31ers as they were then known, left the CRC and founded their own denomination, the Canadian Reformed Church.

The experience of the reformed Dutch immigrants in Canada was different from those in the United States. The Canadian churches were made up (or mainly so) of post-WWII immigrants, while the US churches had been established many years earlier. The US members had little understanding of circumstances in modern Holland. The new immigrants established Dutch Immigration Societies to maintain their Dutch culture and contact.

For at least ten years after World War II Canada permitted only agricultural workers as unsponsored immigrants. Until 1950 those were only actual farm workers, but this policy was relaxed to include workers in related areas such as market gardening. Canada was looking for agricultural laborers, not entrepreneurs or farm owners.

Once a family was in Canada, however, they were able to sponsor other relatives who worked in other trades and occupations. But the Netherlands imposed restrictions on the amount of money anyone could take out of the country (deviezen controle); as a result, only people from the working class or small farmers came to Canada. There were no "capitalists" and few people with higher education. It was these "common" people (kleine luiden) who established all the Christian institutions; leaders arose out of their midst.

Five decades later

Five decades later the children of the immigrants of the fifties are the seniors and the third generation now form the core of the Christian Reformed Church. Agnes Amelink observes that the spirit of the age has caught up with the immigrant community. She draws a comparison with the stores selling Dutch foods and specialties. The grandchildren of the Dutch immigrants don't buy as much of the Dutch foods any more, and the stores have to close, diversify or amalgamate. As their eating habits changed, so did their religious beliefs. Just like the Dutch stores, the CRC has decreased in size the last ten years. The Christian schools and colleges no longer are exclusively Christian reformed but many evangelicals now also attend. And so it is with other organizations; they are no longer an exclusively Christian Reformed segment. In some cases the leadership is no longer Christian Reformed.

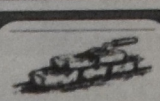
Worship styles have also changed. The grand piano is used more than the organ. The songs that are sung reflect popular music styles, accompanied by guitar and drums. But while there often is a flourishing youth program and biblical and confessional preaching, the religious commitment that there was earlier is often lost. Sunday as a day of rest (no jobs that require Sunday work), faithful attendance at two services each Sunday, Christian education, marrying with a partner from the church, are less important to many people. The change in the Christian Reformed practices is also noticeable. Women in office, and particularly women as ministers reflects a major shift. Since this has been permitted many people have left the Christian Reformed Church and have organized and joined the United Reformed Church which holds more to the old practices. That the Christian Reformed Church is not ready to completely accept other practices of the age was shown this past year when one congregation proposed to allow homosexuals in committed relationships to be office bearers. There was an uproar in the denomination, and the matter was put on hold for the time being.

In conclusion. Why did so many gereformeerden decide to emigrate to Canada, as well as to Australia and the USA? My father and several of my mother's family started talking about emigrating shortly after World War II as a group. That was not possible but in the end we and three other families did. I think they are typical of the frame of mind of the emigrants. They saw the Netherlands as a country with limited scope for them and their children. The regulations to be able to do anything were stifling. There appeared to be much better opportunities for social and economic advancement in the new countries. My father wanted to emigrate, and even applied for emigration to Australia. However, when Canada relaxed its requirements in the summer of 1950, the application was changed to Canada. Two factors: the climate was closer to that of the Netherlands, and there was a church there ready to receive and help them. Amelink mentions that there was a missionary goal, that the immigrants saw it as an opportunity to spread the gospel and establish churches. I did not see that in our family, nor among the immigrants in whose circle we moved in the fifties.

John Hofstee is a retired high school teacher and lives in Listowel, Ontario. He has been an occasional contributor to CC since 1959.

Building Trust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



Remembering the women

The reading of scripture is central to Christian worship. The Roman Catholic, Anglican and many Protestant churches in North America include three biblical readings and a Psalm in the worship service every Sunday and on the special celebrative days of the year. These readings are called lections and are organized according to a three year cycle. Lections are collected in a book called the lectionary. Roman Catholics use the Roman lectionary and Anglicans and Protestants tend to use the Revised Common Lectionary.

In many churches it is by way of the stories and Scripture passages in the lectionary that people learn about the Bible. The lectionary is often used to teach people the basic message of the Bible in a shortened version. It has been revised a number of times over the past decades to include a wider representation of Scripture passages to reflect more fully the true meaning of gospel. The last Revised Common Lectionary was completed in 1992.

In recent years feminist theologians have researched how closely the lectionary reflects the stories of women in the Bible. It is known that the stories about women in the Bible often do not elaborate on many details of their spiritual lives. It appears that the lections do this to an even lesser degree. There are fewer stories of women in the selected readings of the lectionary and they tend to be shorter. Sometimes the stories are scheduled for weekdays rather than Sundays when fewer people would hear about them.

In response to these findings, Frank Henderson has compiled an interesting book of women's stories from scripture designed to be used by preachers during worship services. The book can be used as a text next to the lectionary, as an additional reference, and it has the same three year format. It highlights the stories about the women in the Bible and gives them a contextual and meaningful presence. Anyone interested in reading about women in the Bible will find this a great book. Other contributors to the book are Marjorie Proctor-Smith, Jean Campbell, Ruth Fox, Eileen Shuller and Luba Lukova. The title of the book is *Remembering the Women*.

The first page is unnumbered, and appears even before the index and acknowledgments pages, features the genealogy of Jesus Christ, as compiled by Ann Patrick Ware. It is quite a different genealogy from the one we are used to in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. But it is based on the Scriptures nevertheless. It reads as follows:

A genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of Miriam,
the daughter of Anna:
Sarah was the mother of Isaac,
And Rebekah was the mother of Jacob,
Leah was the mother of Judah,
Tamar was the mother of Perez.
The names of the mothers of Hezron, Ram,
Amminadab,
Nahshon, and Salmon have been lost.
Rahab was the mother of Boaz,
and Ruth was the mother of Obed.
Obed's wife, whose name is unknown, bore
Jesse.
The wife of Jesse was the mother of David.
Bathsheba was the mother of Solomon,
Naamah, the Ammonite, was the mother of
Rehoboam.
Maacah was the mother of Abijam and the
grandmother of Asa.
Azubah was the mother of Jehoshaphat.
The name of Jehoram's mother is unknown.
Athaliah was the mother of Ahaziah,
Zibiah of Beersheba, the mother of Joash.
Jecoliah of Jerusalem bore Uzziah,
Jerusha bore Jotham; Anaz's mother is
unknown.
Abi was the mother of Hezekiah,
Hephzibah was the mother of Manasseh,
Meshullemeth was the mother of Amon,
Jedidah was the mother of Josiah.
Zebidah was the mother of Jehoiakim,
Nehushta was the mother of Jehoiachin,
Hamutal was the mother of Zedekiah.
Then the deportation of Babylon took place.
After the deportation to Babylon
the names of the mothers go unrecorded.
These are their sons:
Jechoniah, Shealtiel, Zerubbabel,
Abiud, Eliakim, Azor and Zadok,
Achim, Eliud, Eleazar,
Matthan, Jacob and Joseph, the husband of
Miriam.
Of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.
The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen
from Sarah to David's mother;
fourteen from Bathsheba to the Babylonian
deportation;
and fourteen from the Babylonian deportation to
Miriam, the mother of Christ.

I found this genealogy very interesting. It was new to me. In future columns of *Building Trust* I would like to reflect further on the stories of women in the Bible.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at 1-780-473-0970, e-mail at:vickyv@telus.net

Church

Tutu rebukes South Africa for stand on Commonwealth and Zimbabwe

Johannesburg (ENI) – Last December Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu warned that if South Africa overlooks human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, it might one day ignore them at home. He has been joined in his critique of "shameful silence" on human rights abuses in Zimbabwe by an alliance of Southern African church leaders.

The political leaders have committed themselves to "solidarity with [Zimbabwe's] President Mugabe and his regime" and are "turning a blind eye to the suffering of ordinary Zimbabwe citizens," the Solidarity Peace Trust charged.

The trust is headed by Zimbabwean and South African bishops from the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, including Pius Ncube, the outspoken Catholic archbishop of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second city.

In December, South African President Thabo Mbeki and leaders from some other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries including Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania, opposed the continued suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth for human rights abuses. Mbeki lobbied for the readmission to the Commonwealth of Zimbabwe and also canvassed support to oust Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon, who had been adamant that Zimbabwe had done nothing to deserve re-admission.

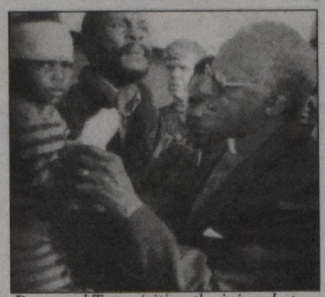
No peculiarly African human rights

Tutu suggested that the credibility of South Africa's own democracy depended on South Africa criticizing the "totally unacceptable and reprehensible" breaches of human rights in Zimbabwe. Tutu said he was "baffled" at the position of some countries who wanted to lift the suspension of Zimbabwe.

"There are no peculiarly African human rights; what has been reported as happening in Zimbabwe is totally unacceptable and reprehensible and we ought to say so," asserted Tutu.

"The credibility of our democracy demands this. If we are seemingly indifferent to human rights violations happening in a neighboring country what is to stop us one day being indifferent to that in our own?" the former South African archbishop warned.

"Nations do not normally interfere in the domestic affairs of other sovereign nations unless and until those domestic issues pose a threat to the security and stability of other nations," said Tutu, the winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for his stand against South Africa's racist apartheid policy in the second half of the last century.



Desmond Tutu visiting the injured at Boipatong, S.A. in June '92.

"Had the international community invoked the rubric of non-interference then we would have been in dire straits in our anti-apartheid struggle," asserted Tutu. "We appealed for the world to intervene and interfere in South Africa's internal affairs. We could not have defeated apartheid on our own."

The South African cleric said there were great expectations for the African Union, the grouping of African nations.

"But it will be a futile exercise if we are not ready to condemn human rights violations unequivocally without fear or favor. Human rights are human rights and they are of universal validity or they are nothing."

[Based on a report by Peter Fabricius]

Indian fundamentalists pressure Dalit Christians to reconvert

Vishal Arora

DELHI (Compass) – India's 250 million Dalits have been virtually enslaved as "untouchables" for more than 2,000 years by upper-caste Hindus. Dalits are not even allowed to enter Hindu temples.

According to Hindu scriptures, the Brahmin caste, the highest in the hierarchy in Hinduism, emerged from the head of Purusa, the creator. The Kshatriya sprang from his shoulders and the Vaishya from his thighs. The Shudra, untouchables who are now called Dalits, came from his feet.

In recent years, India's Dalits have begun to come to Christ in increasingly large numbers. Hindu nationalists, who have historically shown little interest in Dalit affairs in the past, are raising a hue and cry about Christian evangelists' alleged use of allurement and force to entice Dalits to convert.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has raised the issue of conversion while portraying itself as "the protector of Hindu religion." The strategy has created a huge vote bank in the country where 82 percent of the population is Hindu.

The month of November brought assembly elections in five states, and fundamentalist groups affiliated with the BJP took advantage of electoral campaigns to spread rumors about conversion by unfair means.

Hindu nationalist organizations targeted the northern state of Uttaranchal in particular. Media reports indicated that fundamentalist organizations were spreading rumors that "agents of missionaries" were alluring Hindus to Christianity through offers of money and other unfair means.

A national Hindi daily newspaper reported that units of Shiv Sena – "the Army of (the Hindu god) Shiva," an organization with close ties to the BJP – launched a protest in the Biharigarh area of Saharanpur against the reported conversion of 10 Dalit families. The newspaper had earlier carried a story reporting the conversion to Christianity of 30 members of the Dalit families in Shahidwala Grunt village.

The Shiv Sena activists gathered in the village and shouted slogans against the Dalit converts. In a speech to his organization's "soldiers" and local villagers, one leader warned the new Christians that if they did not reconvert to Hinduism, the organization would see to it that they were expelled from the village. He also warned that the organization would take strict action against any missionary found offering incentives to Hindus to convert to Christianity.

Another speaker told the crowd that missionaries were coming from outside to lure Hindus to Christianity. He said they were mainly alluring the poor and unmarried Hindu youth with money and the free mingling of sexes, which is against the Hindu culture.

The provocative speeches created religious tensions in the village, forcing all 10 Christian families to flee the village due to their lives being threatened. Local administrators deployed police to prevent riots.

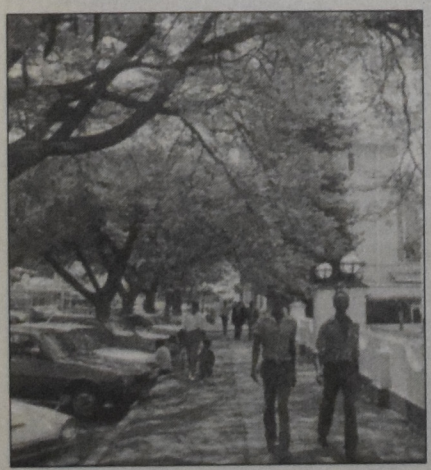
Although the assembly elections in five states are over, religious tensions continue to loom large in several parts of the country. Keenly aware that general elections are due next year, Christians expect the BJP to prolong its hate propaganda against minorities in India in order to win more seats in parliament.

Churches flourish as Zimbabweans seek divine help in crisis

ENI Correspondent

Harare (ENI) – The towering Anglican cathedral of St Mary and All Saints in central Harare is packed out. Hundreds of worshippers unable to find seats, lean against the walls or sit on the bare floor while others brave the scorching sun, standing outside, struggling to clutch at the preacher's words.

A few streets away a small group of people has gathered around a lamp post, taking turns to read a poster inviting people to an all-night prayer "for our beloved country".



A street scene in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Scenes like this have become common in Zimbabwe, where churches are enjoying renewed growth as people seek divine intervention in the face of a massive social and economic crisis facing the Southern African nation.

"I have noticed the numbers in my congregation growing at an unprecedented rate in the last few months," Davison Kanokanga, a pastor and lawyer, told ENI. "Many people are going through various hardships and they are coming to church looking for a lasting solution. When everything else has failed, people tend to turn to God as the last port of call," said Kanokanga. "That is what is happening now."

Zimbabwe was once hailed as the breadbasket of Southern Africa and a beacon of political stability despite some bloody fighting soon after independence. The country is experiencing its worst economic crisis, characterized by high unemployment, currently estimated at around 80 percent, and shortages of fuel and basic commodities like sugar and cooking oil.

The country also appears to be slowly sliding towards anarchy with many incidents of violence reported to have been perpetrated by militant supporters of President Robert Mugabe's ruling party against opposition supporters, pro-democracy activists and ordinary citizens. The dire situation has also triggered a rise in the use of violence to settle disputes.

Yet the national crisis has spawned new ideas such as all-night prayer meetings and lunch-hour office prayers around chosen themes like national reconciliation, justice and political stability.

Pastor Joseph Munemo of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe said his flock doubled last year while a manager in one of Harare's leading bookstores says the sale of Bibles is outstripping those of other popular literature.

"The prevailing hardships are driving more and more people to turn to God," Munemo said. "This is a new challenge to pastors who now need to preach about God who can intervene in the present situation and not about God who is in heaven."

Bookseller Caroline Mutandwa said: "I am surprised at the sudden demand for the Bible. In the past, we never used to have Bibles in stock, but now the Bible is selling more than any popular author you can think of."

Church

Government ruling forces church closures in Jakarta

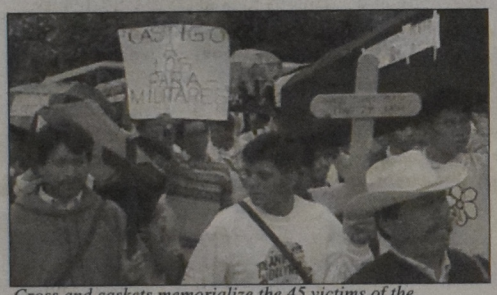
Indonesia (Compass) – Muslim groups are taking advantage of Letter of Decision No. 137, issued by the Indonesian government in 2002, to close several churches and prevent new churches from obtaining buildings in Jakarta. The government document allows for churches in the city to be closed – even if they have the required government permit – should people in the surrounding community object to their existence or location.

In late 2003, Muslim fundamentalists urged several communities to protest against churches in Jakarta, resulting in four church closures.

Rev. Frans Simbolon, leader of Bethel church in Pahlawan Revolusi, said that Islamic leaders pressured him to sign an agreement for church closure, even though the church had been operating for seven years. A week before the church was to close its doors, militants held a demonstration in front of the building. They carried petrol cans, ready to burn down the church if the congregation did not comply.

Churches meeting in hotel conference rooms, restaurants, shops or community halls have also reported intimidation from Islamic groups.

Mexican authorities order judicial review for evangelical prisoners



Cross and caskets memorialize the 45 victims of the Acteal Massacre of December 22, 1997

Mexico (Compass) – Christians are applauding the decision of Mexican authorities to conduct a judicial review of the cases of seventy-six Tzotzil-speaking peasant farmers imprisoned for the past six years in Chiapas for the infamous "Acteal Massacre."

Among them are 34 evangelical Christians affiliated with Presbyterian, Assemblies of God and Pentecostal churches.

The office of the Ministry of the Interior announced the formation of an inter-institutional task force that will review the legality of the arrest and imprisonment of each of the men accused of the crime. According to official charges, the defendants participated in a "paramilitary" attack against a community group at a Catholic hermitage in the village of Acteal in which six men, 21 women and 18 children were killed.

In a public statement, the Interior Ministry stated that, although the judicial review comes in response to petitions from the evangelical Christian community, the issue should not be construed as religious in nature.

"I believe, (this is) the result of thousands of believers who have been praying for many years for justice to be done," said Richard Luna of Open Doors Latin Amer-ica in response to the news. "A just review will ultimately reveal the innocence of these believers and alleviate the suffering of their families."

Police investigators have produced no reliable proof to implicate the imprisoned men. For example, guns supposedly used in the attack did not bear fingerprints of the accused, nor did bullet casings found at the scene match the weapons police later produced as evidence. Witnesses testified that several of the condemned men spent the entire day of the shooting miles away from Acteal.

Despite lack of evidence, police arrested 90 people over the course of three months in connection with the shooting, apparently in reaction to intense national and international pressure to apprehend suspects. Officers depended largely on accusations lodged against the defendants by their rivals in a local land dispute. Some observers believe the authorities singled out evangelicals because they knew them to be peaceable citizens who would offer little resistance to arrest.

Chapter & Verse

Al Wolters

The historicity of the Tower of Babel

"So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it is called Babel – because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world." (Gen 11:9)

To a significant extent, the identity of evangelical biblical scholarship is defined by its emphasis on the historical reliability of the Bible. Although this emphasis needs to be nuanced in many ways, it remains true that an important difference between evangelical and mainline biblical scholarship is the importance attached by evangelicals to affirming that the events which the Bible records actually happened.

Let me illustrate what I mean by referring to the story of the Tower of Babel (that is, Babylon) in Genesis 11. There are great historical difficulties with a traditional interpretation of this narrative, as though it described the origin of the diversity of languages. For one thing, the so-called Table of Nations in the preceding chapter has already repeatedly stated that different languages had arisen among the descendants of Japheth, Ham, and Shem. Furthermore, the Tower of Babel is very probably an allusion to the great "ziggurat" or temple-tower which dominated the center of Babylon – but there were already different languages before that ziggurat was ever built, for example Sumerian, Akkadian and Egyptian. Furthermore, the evidence of comparative linguistics does not support the view that historical Babylon was the place where the diversification of languages originated. Consequently it is commonly assumed in mainline biblical studies today that the story of the confusion of language at the Tower of Babel is a myth which teaches a spiritual truth about human pride, but which has no historical basis.

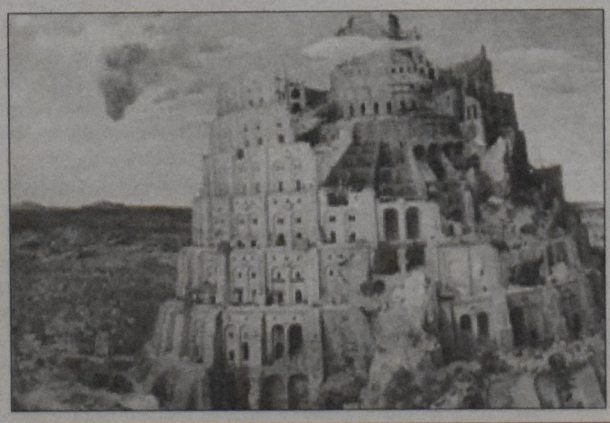
To Professor John Walton of Wheaton College goes the credit for proposing an interpretation of the Tower of Babel episode which avoids both the increasingly untenable traditional view and the mythical or non-historical view of most biblical scholarship today. In a fascinating 1995 essay in *Bulletin of Biblical Research*, entitled "The Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel Account and Its Implications," Walton argues that the historical reality underlying this account is the development of brick-making, urbanization, and the building of ziggurats in southern Mesopotamia toward the end of the fourth millennium B.C. He interprets the confusion of language as possibly referring to the differentiation of *Semitic* languages at the time. All of this is backed up by a wealth of evidence from the known history of the ancient Near East. I find it a very impressive piece of work, not least because it takes seriously the challenge of identifying the historical reality to which this familiar episode from the Primeval History refers.

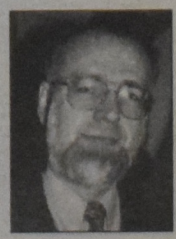
The Breakdown of the Old Babylonian Empire

Nevertheless, I myself prefer another approach to the Tower of Babel story – an approach pioneered some twenty years ago by Professor Don Sinnema, now of Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights IL. Crucial in this approach is the distinction between l šôn and _pâ, the two Hebrew words for "language." The former, literally "tongue," is the standard Hebrew word for a "language" in the sense that English is a language, while the latter, literally "lip," refers more generally to "speech" or "communication." It is significant that Genesis 10, when it speaks of the different languages which developed among the descendants of Japheth, Ham and Shem, consistently uses l šôn, but that Genesis 11, when it speaks of the language of the tower builders which was confused, consistently uses pâ.

In other words, what is confused in the Tower of Babel episode is "speech" or "communication." The historical reality being described is that of the breakdown of communication, not the development of different languages. If we adopt this view of the confusion of language in Genesis 11, it may be possible to relate it to the breakup of the Old Babylonian empire. This was the first empire in the history of the world, which finally collapsed because the center could not hold. The capital city, with its famous ziggurat Etemenanki, was too far removed from the outlying parts of the empire to maintain control. In other words, the lines of communication were overextended, and communication broke down.

This is not the place to get into the detailed arguments for and against Walton's interpretation of the Tower of Babel story as opposed to my own. I mention the two only to illustrate the fact that it is not necessary to accept the dilemma with which mainstream biblical scholarship tends to confront us: either accept the mythical character of the Primeval History or be condemned to defending a traditional understanding which flies in the face of the archeological and linguistic evidence.





Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. After a six-month interruption, he is resuming his monthly contribution to this column. The reflections above are excerpted from a paper which he presented to the Institute for Biblical Research some years ago.

The season

Stories in the snow

Harry der Nederlanden

Monday morning. There's a thick covering of snow on the ground, and the trees are wrapped in their white winter stoles. The first big snowfall of the season (the one we were hoping for just before Christmas) and the first sustained freeze. The local news tells us that the grape growers are finally out harvesting the grapes for ice wine. My fingers ache at the thought of being out there all night picking bunches of frozen grapes capped with snow.

Here and there discarded Christmas trees at the side of the road put on one last show before being shredded. As I pass by, I prop one up in a snow bank. "It probably looks better now than when it was inside," I think cynically. If the artificial trees displayed in the mall are any indication, the decorations are becoming gaudier than ever, smothering any beauty the tree itself may have – an apt image of Christmas itself.

Aaah, but this isn't a morning for cynical reflections. The falling snow and the deep blanket on the ground muffle all sound and lower the sky. They create an aura of reverence and intimacy that is at once comforting and invigorating.

Everywhere I walk people are outdoors, shoveling driveways, cleaning snow off cars, walking their kids to school or their dogs around the block. It's one of those days that turns the air into champagne, and you go outside just to drink it in and feel the tingle in your lungs.

I breathe deeply and promptly trigger a coughing fit. Well, it was a good thought anyhow.

The air seems to hold the snow in suspension. It's falling in slow motion. The air is lazy, reluctant even to convey sound. The sounds of people's voices and of snow shovels scraping sidewalks falter in mid-air and bury themselves in the snow.

Vrum, vrum, varrroooom! One of my neighbors – he recently turned 70 I think – got a snowblower for Christmas. But even the throaty growl of its motor seems to tune itself to the temper of the day. It is not shrill, protesting, but deep and appreciative, eager to coil itself into that thick white stuff.

Others have been out this morning before me, impatient to test their snowblowers, I see, as I pass from one neighborhood to another. On one block the entire sidewalk from one end to the other has been cleared, and the tire tracks show that it was all done by the same person. Some retired fellow was probably having so much fun with his new snowblower that he didn't want to stop. Or perhaps he was still gripped by the spirit of Christmas. There he stands beside his new machine. I wave and nod. He nods back, with an embarrassed grin. Maybe he's afraid that he has spoiled someone else's fun.

Snow contemplations

Some older people seem to need an excuse to come outside in the winter. There are a couple of older men on our street who will never come out just to go for a walk, but when it's snowing they come out regularly to scrape off their driveways, lean on their shovels and gaze up into the snow-filled sky. They're not cursing the snow. They're contemplating.

Softly-falling snow sifting down out of the heavens makes contemplatives of almost all. More so than any sermon. Snowflakes, you see, are also words – whispering syllables. They speak of vastness – of endless fields and forests, mountain ranges and winding river valleys – contained in the hollow of God's gaze.

As the snow covers the earth, it engenders in us thoughts of a new order, a new simplicity. Life is reduced to basics – to breathing and keeping warm. We feel one with our neighbors, for we are all small and slow in the face of the merging elements, this melding together of heaven and earth. The simplicity of it excites us and steadies us, for it pulls us out of our subjectivity into the bite of frost and the crunch of snow and the sight of our breath pluming out before us like little ghosts escaping skyward from our bodies.

Leaving tracks

Have you noticed that as you walk, passing from sidewalks that are shoveled to those that aren't, you are forced to change the way you walk? When you plow through deep snow, you lean forward a bit more and do a bit of a shuffle or waddle. You can't push off as hard from your back foot; otherwise you slide back half as much as you go forward. Your body knows this and makes the adjustment more or less automatically. Sailors develop a peculiar swagger and so do people in the snowbelt – the winter waddle.

The crunch underfoot this morning is not that of cold, dry snow but of packing snow. Whoever walked here before me was walking a big dog. The shape of his pawprints, even of his nails, are perfectly impressed in the snow as if in wax. On colder days, the deep snow would have collapsed into the tracks and blotted their shape. The dog's owner must have been wearing new boots, Christmas gifts perhaps, for every detail of the tread pattern is sharply imprinted in the snow.

When I look back at my own tracks, I see that most of the tread of my boots is worn off. Only the instep leaves a pattern – spelling out Adidas with every step I take. It's unavoidable. Although I religiously avoid clothes with brands emblazoned on them. (Why should I be a walking billboard?) I discover that I am nevertheless stamping the name of Adidas all over God's pristine creation. Behind my back the snow is being imprinted with syllables I had not figured on.

Whuump! As if in protest, one of the silver maples I'm passing under dumps a forkful of snow down my neck. Serves me right for looking down so much. As I look up, however, another huge wad of snow comes hurtling down. At this temperature – right around freezing – even the trees know it's snowball weather, and they don't pay any attention to the prohibitions of school principals. The local news this morning included a warning against throwing snowballs from a school official.

Luckily I grew up in a less litigious age. In grade school the teachers and sometimes even the principal would join in our snowball fights, much to their peril, for they became the target for every kid on the school ground. Of course, in the Edmonton area you didn't get packing snow very often, so you had to make the most of it.

We didn't have political correctness then either. In grade five and six boys would chase down the girls they liked best and wash their faces with snow. And if you were smart, you let her get back at you. Soon both your faces would be bright red and you'd both be breathing hard and rolling in the snow like a couple of husky dogs.

Winter makes us Canadians

When I was a boy, in winter I loved to go trudging across the fields all by myself, especially when it was snowing and blowing. The colder the better. When everyone else was inside, it felt as if you had the whole outdoors to yourself. As long as you were tolerably warm, it was exhilarating to have the snow swirling around you. The lower the visibility the more satisfying. Sometimes a hard crust formed on top of the deep snow and it would hold your weight – until you came to a more sheltered spot and your feet would suddenly break through. That could make for hard walking. The hard crust would bark

your shins as your leg pivoted forward. I often wished I had snowshoes.

Once when I was in the fifth grade, after school a friend and I hiked to the North Saskatchewan River, after hearing that it was almost completely frozen over. A mutual friend had bragged that he had walked across to the other side. We'd never done that. It sounded like quite an adventure.

When we had clambered down the steep river bank – quite a feat in itself during the winter – we were confronted by a jumble of ice floes many feet thick, jutting up at all angles and with deep crevasses in between. Although we were bold adventurers, we quickly agreed that our friend was a liar. No one could possibly have clambered over that mess. Underneath you could still hear the ominous gurgle of the river.

By the time we'd scrambled back up the steep river bank, by our best estimation at least two hundred feet straight up, it was already dark. He started home in one direction and I in the other. It began to snow hard. But the winter darkness is not very deep in that part of the country, especially when there's snow on the ground. Everything is gray.

Out of the grayness, there emerged three gray shadows – three large dogs. As I plowed on through the snow, they circled me, their heads hanging low. Slowly their circle grew smaller. None of them uttered a sound and none of them wagged their tails.

Stopping, I waved my arms and shouted, Yaah! They immediately vanished into the gray curtain of snow.

As I plodded on, however, they returned, circling silently. This time, when one of them darted toward me, I scooped up a handful of snow and hurled it at him. Although the snowball broke up before it went very far, it scared the dogs and they vanished once more.

Kneeling in the snow, I took off my mittens and used the heat from my hands to make a few real snowballs. The next time the dogs appeared, I nailed the nearest one. He uttered a yelp and the pack vanished. This time they didn't come back.

The next day I told my friends that a pack of wolves – "timber wolves" – had followed me home from the river, but that I had fought them off with snowballs. For a week or so I didn't have to wash anybody's face to command respect. How many other kids could boast that they had held off a pack of hungry wolves single-handed?

Yes, winter puts the spine into us Canadians. And because we can show it in confrontation with the elements, we don't feel the need to show it in the political arena.

Winter is the season that puts us face to face with the mythic elements that form our national character. It's the season that transforms people from many different countries and climates into a Canadian people. Who needs ideology? Of course, to be so transformed, you can't stay huddled inside. You have to venture out when the wind chill is 30 below and the snow is swirling and your spit freezes on your chin.

No one should be permitted to claim Canadian citizenship until he or she has suffered frostbite. Of course, with the lack of free-ranging dogs, kids will now have to conjure up some other mythic adversary....

Don't let winter freeze your spirits: here's how to beat those January blues

Lisa M. Petsche

The cold temperatures and limited daylight of winter can negatively affect our mood and our energy level. Combine this with post-Christmas letdown – now that festivities are over and the decorations have been packed away – and the result for many people is a case of the January doldrums or winter blues (not to be confused with clinical depression). Following are tips to help overcome them.

Pamper yourself

- Get a cozy pair of slippers – perhaps a bootie style for maximum warmth.
- Keep throws draped over chairs and across the foot of beds, for easy access on frosty days and nights. These come in many fabrics, colors and prints to suit any décor, doubling as attractive home accents.
- Invest in a quality set of flannel sheets.
- Soak in a hot, fragrant bath.
- Stock up on favorite hot beverage ingredients, such as hot chocolate mix or apple cider and cinnamon sticks or mulling spices.
- Order takeout food for a change of cuisine.

Warm your decor

Follow these tips to create a cozy atmosphere in your home:

- Evaluate your lighting, and change it where necessary, using higher wattage bulbs, relocating lamps or bringing spares out of storage.
- Add warm, rich colors – such as burgundy or gold – as room accents. These can take the form of cushion covers, table cloths, place mats, a mantel scarf, and so on. Brass accessories are also a winter favorite because they reflect light.
- Add texture with warm accent fabrics like velour, chenille, or fleece – the softer the better. Needlepoint cushions are another popular choice at this time of year. You can also provide texture with a bowl of pinecones or potpourri, embossed candles or a grapevine wreath.
- Make generous use of candles, especially substantial pillar types, placed in clusters. Use scented candles – such as vanilla or bayberry – to increase the sensory impact. Situate them where they can't be knocked over.

Keep busy

These are some ways to enjoyably or productively spend leisure time:

- Start a daily journal.
- Try some new recipes.
- Borrow or buy movies, music CDs and reading material, or reacquaint yourself with old favorites you have on hand.
- Work on some challenging jigsaw puzzles or crossword puzzles.
- Get a computer and learn how to use it.
- Engage in a handcraft or other hobby as time permits, reviving a former pastime or trying something new.
- Peruse gardening magazines and catalogues and plan this year's garden.
- Organize your collection of photos, music or videotapes.
- Do some de-cluttering around your home (kitchen drawers, closets, spare rooms and attics are typical hot spots), donating no longer needed items to a local charity.
- Rearrange the furniture in one or more rooms, or swap furnishings among rooms. Alternatively, start planning a major room redecorating or home renovation project for a later time, perusing store flyers, catalogues and decorating magazines and collecting ideas in a file.
- Plan a special outing – to a restaurant or perhaps a sporting or cultural event (take a taxi if necessary).

Further suggestions

- Look after your health: get adequate rest, eat nutritious foods and try to fit in some exercise. A stationary bike or treadmill is a good choice year-round, since it may be hard to get out for a walk, let alone to a fitness class.
- Nurture your spirit by reading the Bible or other spiritual material, and listening to worship music or relaxation tapes incorporating sounds of nature.
- Maintain contact with others: invite friends and relatives over; write letters, send e-mails or set up a regular phone schedule to keep in touch with loved ones at a distance.
- Do something nice for someone. It will take your mind off your own situation and make you feel good, too.
- Find reasons to get outside for fresh air, even briefly. For example, sweep the porch after a dusting of snow, get a mailbox you have to go outdoors to access, or walk to a nearby store to get your newspaper (weather permitting, of course) rather than have it delivered.
- Keep blinds and curtains open during daylight hours; close them as soon as darkness begins to set in.
- Bring a bit of nature into your home: get a plant to nurture or buy fresh flowers every few weeks.
- Get a bird feeder and seed, a pair of binoculars and a bird watching guide.
- Create little things to look forward to: a visit with a friend, watching a favorite movie, calling a long-distance loved one, buying a book you've been wanting to read or getting something new to wear.
- Shop by mail order – via telephone or the Internet – and take advantage of stores that offer delivery service if you're nervous about winter driving or fearful of slipping and falling.
- Prepare for a power outage by creating an emergency kit containing candles and holders, matches, flashlights or a battery-powered lamp, a battery-operated radio, fresh batteries, blankets, bottled water and non-perishable, ready-to-eat food. Store it in an accessible place. Stock up on any necessary medical supplies, and don't let prescriptions run too low before refilling them. Also stock up on wood if you own a fireplace. Keep a list of emergency numbers – including utility companies – by the phone. Then relax, knowing you're ready for whatever nature dishes out.

Lisa M. Petsche is a clinical social worker and freelance writer.

When fridges die

Ron de Boer

Last week our fridge died.

I assumed the role of caregiver when the compressor began wheezing loudly one morning before I headed off to work. I held my hand against the rattling grill at the back and whispered gently to it that it had better not bloody well die before the 'appliance sale blowout' at Sears.

A few days later, with all the family gathered around, Kenmore groaned one last time, then shuddered into silence.

We held a brief memorial before the Sears 'delivery associates' solemnly carried him to the curb. Doors removed, our beloved Kenmore was a mere shell of his former self, barely recognizable without all his fridge magnets and basketball schedules. To allow him to pass into the appliance afterlife with dignity, Karen wiped the ketchup stains bleeding down and pooling on the shelf inside the door. Yesterday, he was taken away to that refrigerator graveyard somewhere in the municipality.

Kenmore had been our first refrigerator, purchased with my first paycheck after my first week of teaching. It's difficult letting go of firsts. With the haunting image of the grinning Sears appliance salesman thumbing through the cash we had just handed him (we didn't trust credit cards in the early years), we discovered we would have to wait until my next paycheck to buy the food requiring refrigeration.

But we didn't care. We were young and carefree and didn't mind eating at our parents' house for a couple of more weeks. I remember the two of us standing in the kitchen, holding hands, smiling at Kenmore as if he were an adopted child.

He was a good fridge. He whirred as quietly as a light bulb in the early years, and didn't mind when we dressed him up with pizza fridge magnets or Christmas photos of our old college friends. In those days we didn't load him up with smelly casseroles, and he didn't have to worry about kids spilling milk all over his ribbed shelves. He lit up every time we opened his door and dutifully kept the odd six pack cold when the guys came over to watch the Bruins beat the Leafs. He never complained during our frequent moves in the early years when we surgically reversed his doors and handles with each new kitchen.

When the kids arrived, he endured their slobber when, attempting to walk, they pulled themselves upright and pawed pablum all over his cool white skin. As the kids got older, he became an easel with wide-brushed paintings of stick people and houses with chimney smoke. He quietly endured being plastered with French spelling lists and class trip permission forms.

Kenmore has been the hub of our family's life for the past 17 years.

When the kids would bounce their super balls or roll their cereal box gizmos around the kitchen, Kenmore playfully swallowed them, then sportingly released the toys when the kids tickled his undersides with a yardstick. He even survived a phase when the kids pestered us to paint black spots all over him to turn him into a dairy cow – something they'd seen on a Saturday morning kid show – then purred affectionately when we said no.

The kids continued to grow and Kenmore hummed faithfully along through the years. The bottles of formula gave way to moldy cheese science projects. The doors are now filled with bottles of water for high school basketball practices.

When they became teenagers, the older ones sat cross-legged in front of him, devising really, really deep poetry with the multi-colored magnetic letters covering Kenmore's door. I imagine he would like to have shaped a word or two in the teen queens' directions when they went through their "random poetry" phase of sitting five or six feet in front of the door and pelting him with letters, hoping really, really deep words and poems would begin appearing randomly.

Five years ago, Kenmore began feeling his age when his interior light bulb burned out. When we replaced that bulb, the new one burnt out, too. We went through several bulbs before giving up. Kenmore just didn't have the energy anymore. For the past five years we've had to use a flashlight to locate Tupperware containers of macaroni hidden behind milk pitchers.

This morning, when we went fridge shopping, the five year old said, "Hey, these ones have lights inside!"

The new grinning Sears salesman, rubbing his palms together, said, "Yes, they do. And they have many other nifty features. Can I help you, folks?"

While Kenmore has been the hub of our family's life for the past 17 years, we're looking forward to getting the new fridge. Truth be known, he was an energy black hole.

In his elderly years, we were supporting his old age by paying far too much money to Kitchener utilities. His death was truly a blessing to our pocket book. Many of the new fridges are "energy approved" by the Ontario government; when you purchase one of these specially tagged refrigerators by GE or Amana, the government rebates the provincial sales tax you pay to the grinning Sears sales guy.

The selection in the Sears appliance show room is varied. You can buy a stainless steel unit with the fridge on the right and the freezer on the left. You can get water and ice dispensers on the front, and you can control the humidity levels in the celery drawers.

We chose one with the freezer on the bottom and the fridge on top, a decision that forced us to think outside of the fridge box. We were both raised with the freezer on top, but the grinning sales guy informed us that we go into the fridge at least 30 times a day but only in the freezer on average five times a day.

"Makes sense, doesn't it, sunshine?" he said through his grinning teeth to the five year old. He then informed us of the deferred payment plan and arranged for the delivery.

This morning our new Kenmore arrived. All six of us stood in the kitchen admiring our new addition. The first magnet to hug it said Education is Educaring, followed by the first really, really deep poem by one of the teen queens. The first painting was the gingerbread man with red hair and a yellow mouth. And the first Bible text on the new fancy-dancy suction cup chalkboard on the side: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Our wedding text.

I realize I'm exploring my inner nitwit when lamenting the passing away of a refrigerator, but it strikes me that the fridge is a symbol of sorts in life. It is the centerpiece of our lives. On it can be found what defines us; in it can be found what we value.

Fridges teach that it's not just what's on the outside but what's on the inside that's important. On the outside, Kenmore looks the same-same white skin, same pizza fridge magnets, same postcards from our trip to Disney this summer. But on the inside, he is dead; he is no longer capable of fulfilling the most basic task of keeping our food cold. He may look like a fridge, but he isn't one at all anymore.

Our fridge teaches us that there will come a time in our own lives when our usefulness in this world will come to an end, and that those closest to us will have to let go when that time comes. Writer Max Lucado has said that if God had a refrigerator, yours and my picture would be on it. That's comforting to know, isn't it?

I wonder if we can say the same about God's picture.

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The most valuable gift

Lynn Marie-Ittner Klammer

"Look at these" I said to my husband as I lifted a set of knives out of their cardboard box. We were unwrapping our wedding presents, and this one was from a relative who had attended the wedding.

As my husband looked over the set of cheap plastic-handled knives, a slip of paper fell out of the box. The paper indicated that the knives were a free item used as a gas station promotion. "Well maybe they don't have much money" my mother speculated as we set the knives aside. Even without the small incriminating note, four cheap knives seemed an odd wedding gift. It was clearly our least valuable gift.

The gifts we received at our wedding helped with our new life

together, but as the years passed many fell by the wayside. Plush bath towels eventually frayed and wore, needing to be replaced. A barbecue grill was set aside for a newer model when it became too deteriorated from use. Dishes broke and pictures faded...but through it all, the knives were still there in our silverware drawer. Every day for the past sixteen years we have used those cheap, plastic-handled knives. They have never needed sharpening, and have even outperformed expensive steak knives. As the years have passed, my husband and I have often commented on how useful those knives have been, and what a surprise it is that what once seemed the least valuable gift, has turned out to be among the most useful.

It seems to me that many of God's gifts are that way. Early judgements can be deceiving. When I went camping with my four children, I thought it would be a terrible ordeal, but it turned out to be a precious bonding experience. When my seven-year-old daughter had to have surgery I thought it would be a traumatic, frightening memory for her, but instead it has inspired her to be more empathetic to other children. Gifts are not always what they seem.

Even the early Christians did not see Jesus' death on the cross for the priceless gift that it was. They saw it as an ending, a loss from which they were devastated. It was only with time that the true value of the crucifixion became evident, transforming what was a horrible experience into a miraculous revelation.

I have learned to reserve judgement in my life whenever possible. My knives serve as a reminder to me that gifts are not always what they seem. With time, what once seemed worthless may prove itself to be the most valuable gift of all.

Don't worry, be happy

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

"Why wouldn't I be happy? I get paid to be happy," said Yasir, with a wide grin.

Yasir was born in Jamaica, some 24 years ago, as he puts it, "into a happy family that lived in a happy village." He speaks English, French and Spanish with rapid fire accuracy as he switches effortlessly from one to the other. Today he is employed by the large Panamanian resort where we stayed for our vacation in January. As part of the activities team, he gives dance lessons, leads aerobics by the pool, and performs in the nightly entertainment. In general, Yasir and his associates make sure the hotel guests have a good time.

On this particular morning Jack and I were among the 20 or so tourists who had assembled in the shade to learn a few basic Spanish phrases from him.

I felt the warm breeze on my face, and scanned the tropical surroundings. No wonder he's happy. He lives in paradise.

Even as the thought crossed my mind I realized the arrogance of it. To a winter-weary Canadian, palm trees and free-range peacocks might spell heaven, but real life in Panama isn't all pineapples and pottery.

With its majestic mountains and the engineering marvel of the Panama Canal, this is a country known worldwide for its importance to global trade, as well as its export commodities of coffee and sugar cane. Its total population is 2.8 million, half of which lives within the vicinity of Panama City. Minimum wage is $253 US per month, and the national unemployment rate is 14%. Panama City's skyline offers an eclectic vista of flashy skyscrapers starkly contrasting with ramshackle shanties. The average Panamanian might not have to deal with snowstorms, but like all cultures, there are indigenous stress factors.

I was thinking of Yasir's words early the next morning as I sauntered barefoot along the beach. By "happy," of course, he meant an attitude, or mindset, more than a state of being. I stooped to pick up a seashell, one of thousands along the shore, and admired its symmetry and brilliantly colored design. A sand crab skittered into its hole, leaving behind a complicated network of tracks in the wet sand. A small fishing boat puttered by, its two occupants silhouetted against the sunrise.

Paradise, I thought again. I could be happy here. And frankly, at that moment I was very happy. Who wouldn't have been?

Talk to me about the Garden of Eden and a picture of Panama or someplace like it pops into my head. However, content as I was on holidays to stroll along the seashore, if you told me that for the rest of my life all I would have to do is walk the beach and search for the perfect shell, my happiness would dissipate as quickly as the morning mist. I need much more than peace and serenity. I also need stimulation-intellectually, physically and emotionally.

Nevertheless, it's easy to acknowledge God's presence when the senses are filled with so much beauty. What escalates a temporary happiness into permanence is the awareness of God's presence and purpose wherever we are and whatever we're doing.

Timothy Rogers (1658-1728), Puritan author of *Trouble of Mind and the Disease of Melancholy*, wrote: "We must know that the infinite majesty of heaven is not subject to those unquiet passions to which our weak and frail nature is vulnerable. He is not sometimes what He was not before. He is always in Himself the very same. His essence is unchangeable, but He is pleased to stoop to our weakness, and clothes His intentions in words that may most suitably convey to our minds the knowledge of what He designs. In His most pure and blessed nature there is a perpetual calm and tranquility."

This week it's back to ski-boots instead of sandals. I'm looking at snowdrifts out the window, not sandbanks. My usual schedule has resumed and there are details to catch up on because I've been away. I confess that I don't wake up every morning with a song in my heart or even a smile on my face. Yet I can honestly claim that I'm "happy." That happiness stems from knowing that God is here – all around me and within me. He is the same, regardless of weather or circumstances, and whatever happens in this life, I'll spend eternity in paradise with Him.

Heidi VanderSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont. Her email: hmvanderslikke@hotmail.com

Evangelists want to create animated Bible to promote gospel in Africa

Fredrick Nzwili

Nairobi, KENYA (ENI) — Biblical advocates meeting in Africa have called on animators, making use of pictures, to help them strengthen their work as promoters of God's word, citing a deep hunger for the scriptures in the continent.

"In spite of tremendous efforts by groups and individuals to make the word available to Christians in Africa in languages they can read and understand, many people have yet to possess a copy of the Bible," Rev. Terwase Akaabiam, told ENI in Nairobi.

"The challenge facing us all is to provide the Bible to all Christians in languages they can understand," said Akaabiam. "We wish to propose that we jointly embark upon a project tagged 'Access to Bible in Africa and Madagascar'."

The animators, mainly from the Roman Catholic Church, met in Nairobi November 16-22, for a pan-African workshop to seek a common vision in presenting the Scriptures to people in Africa.

The animators said wars and conflicts had made it hard for people to listen to the word.

"Africa needs peace and justice," Dr Jean Claude Loba-Mkole, told the workshop. "But the two will not be achieved unless there is peace among the Christian groups," he said, stressing the need to work together in promoting the gospel.

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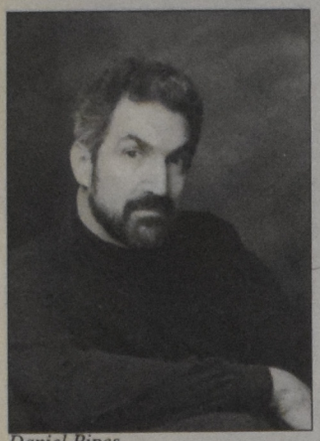
Book Review

Islam and its struggle with extremism



Daniel Pipes

Militant Islam Reaches America, Daniel Pipes, W.W. Norton & Company. 326 pp. $24.
Reviewed by Harry Antonides

"Militant Islam distinguishes itself from any other contemporary political movement in the magnitude of its ambitions, seeking not just to influence the adherents of one religion or control one region. Rather, it aspires to unlimited and universal power."

Some time ago, I watched what was presented as a documentary on the PBS network, "Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet." Anyone unfamiliar with this topic would not have known that this was a highly sanitized version of Islam. It was in fact nothing but religious propaganda. None of the hard questions were even hinted at, e.g., about the wretchedness of life in most Islamic countries, the cheering in the streets when innocents were killed by terrorists who acted in the name of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad.

A religion of Peace? The one great question looming over any discussion of Islam is whether it is a religion of peace and freedom or of violence and oppression. The answer to that question depends on whom you ask.

Islam apologists hasten to assure us that Islam is a religion of peace. The critics, who invariably take great pains to distinguish between Islam as such and its militant version, tell a very different story.

What are we to believe?

The problem is that the Koran is divided on this point. In some parts it speaks of peace and goodwill; in many others, however, it speaks of warfare and forcibly subduing the infidels, especially the people of the Book, Jews and Christians. The history of Islam's rapid advance into North Africa, southern Europe and eastward even into India by military force and conquest is a clearly established fact.

As to the current scene, no one can be totally ignorant of the many Muslim-controlled countries where only one way of believing and living is rigidly enforced. The cruelty to which women and those who refuse to fall in line are subjected is grotesque. The daily diet of hatred toward Israel, the West and especially the "Great Satan" spewed from the Muslim-controlled media and the mosques in those countries is creating a poisonous reservoir of fanaticism and fury.

Millions of Muslims have migrated to the western democracies where they are free to practise their religion. To be sure, many of them, probably even a majority, are not interested in imposing their beliefs on anyone else and are prepared to live in peace with their new neighbors. The problem is that they are a silent majority (apart from some very courageous souls). Worse, a substantial number of these newcomers or converts, egged on by their fanatical mullahs, seek nothing less than taking over their new homelands.

Many of these militants are uncritical admirers of Osama bin Laden and the late Ayatollah Khomeini who masterminded the 1979 revolution in Iran. Though benefitting from the hospitality and prosperity of the West, some serve as a fifth column trained for sabotage and murder. This highly secret network of "sleepers" is responsible for planning, financing or carrying out attacks on every continent, including in the U.S. and Canada. Think of Ahmed Ressam, who was caught when he crossed the Canada-US border with the intention to blow up the Los Angeles airport.

Those who speak out to protest against this kind of criminal behavior in the West better brace themselves for some rough treatment. They are bound to meet with strong condemnation and vilification. For example, some well-organized Muslim organizations in North America, such as the Council on American-Islamic relations, the American Muslim Council, and the Muslim Public Affairs Council are ready to denounce anyone who dares to point out these facts as a racist and hate mongerer.

Jihad Comes to America

If you think that I am exaggerating and possibly suffering from an overdose of conspiracy theories, read Daniel Pipes' *Militant Islam Reaches America*. This book is a catalogue of deception and criminality carried on under the cover of Islam right in the heartland of the free world.

The author has devoted a lifetime to the study of Islam, and is the author of numerous articles and ten books. He is director of Middle East Forum, a prize-winning columnist, has served in the US departments of State and Defense and has taught at the University of Chicago and at Harvard University. This book is a collection of articles written between 1994 and 2002, but they have lost none of their relevance. In fact, they have only increased in urgency.

Pipes strenuously draws a distinction between the religion of Islam and the ideology of militant Islam, or Islamism. His criticism is aimed at the latter. He acknowledges that there are also moderate Muslims, although they are overshadowed and often intimidated into silence by the Islamic militants.

In part one of his book Pipes deals with such questions as: Is Islam a threat? Is its militant version caused by poverty? Do moderate Islamists exist? He details the inner struggles of Islam, the western incomprehension of this religion, and the tendency to accept too uncritically the claims of its apologists.

The second part takes a look at the claims of the militant leaders of Islam in America. In some instances these spokesmen for Islam are regarded as upstanding American citizens.

Take Siraj Wahhaj, a black convert to Islam, described by Reuter's news agency on April 24, 2001, as "a respected scholar and leader of the Muslim community in Brooklyn." In June 1991, he was the first Muslim to deliver the prayer invocation for the US House of Representatives. Nonetheless, this is what he said to a gathering of Muslims in New Jersey in late 1992: "If we were united and strong, we'd elect our own emir [leader] and give allegiance to him ... take my word, if 6-8 million Muslims unite in America, the country will come to us." In 1998, he openly called for replacing the US government with a caliphate.

Wahhaj is no exception. Others urge their followers to remember that they came to the US for one reason only, to serve as "ambassadors for Islam." In the words of a Muslim lecturer in San Francisco – as reported by Jeffrey Lang, a convert who was dismayed upon hearing this – all Muslims "are obligated to desire, and when possible to participate in, the overthrow of any non-Islamic government – anywhere in the world – in order to replace it by an Islamic one."

Stealth and slander

Against the background of this audacious call to take over America, the author discusses the secretive network of support via fundraising, propaganda, indoctrination, and even smuggling, theft and forgery. He writes that most of the converts to Islam are African-Americans, while the total number of Muslims in this category is estimated to be one million.

One notorious convert to Islam is convicted murderer Jamil Al-Amin, formerly known as H. Rap Brown. Despite his criminal record, the Muslim leadership has come to his defence and hailed him for his "moral character," all the while playing the "race card" and a perceived anti-Muslim bias to the hilt. All of this makes a mockery of the much-touted moral purity of Islam.

What makes this a highly valuable source of information is the author's careful and thorough research. Every critical statement about militant Islam is backed by precise names, dates, sources and pronouncements that make this book invaluable. It also details the extremes the militants go to in order to silence the critics by threats and intimidation.

It takes raw courage and strong convictions to do what Muslim critics of their militant leaders are doing. In Muslim-controlled countries, a number of them paid with their lives. But Islamic death squads even reached into the West, including the United States. For example, Rashad Khalifa, an Egyptian-born biochemist and vocal opponent of militant Islam, was stabbed to death in Tucson, Arizona in January 1990.

Not only immigrants to the US encounter the wrath of the fanatics. One such person is Steven Emerson, author of an award-winning television documentary that used material from Islamist videos to expose their anti-Semitic and anti-American ideology. He received death threats that made it impossible for him to lead a normal life right in the heartland of America.

An intellectual scandal

Not surprisingly, Daniel Pipes has been at the receiving end of all the usual accusations of racism and bigotry issued by Islamist spokespeople, especially the Council on American-Islamic Relations. His detractors have slandered him in numerous publications and demanded that he be fired. They even created a website devoted to destroying his reputation, forcing him to respond in detail to each of those accusations. Though no one has issued a fatwa against Pipes as far as is known, he has received some very chilling threats.

(When he was invited to speak at York University in Toronto this spring, protesters and faculty demanded that his invitation be withdrawn. To its credit, the university administration refused to give in to this demand, but the meeting could only proceed by careful screening of attendees and the presence of a large contingent of police.)

The aggressive mob tactics of the militants have persuaded many commentators to shy away from doing what Pipes is doing. They play it safe and issue nothing but pious blandishment. In response, Pipes reserves his strongest criticism for his academic colleagues who play this game of appeasement, either out of conviction or cowardice. He calls this attempt to avoid or whitewash the true meaning of the Islamic jihad an "intellectual scandal."

This is an insightful book by a courageous author. It will help you to know that next time you watch the PBS documentary or similar attempts at sanitizing Islam, you are not watching a true documentary, but propaganda.

Daniel Pipes' website, www.DanielPipes.org contains information about the author and a large number of his columns and other writings.

Harry Antonides
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Teamwork and Healthy Pastoring

Rachel Boehm Van Harmelen

Today's churches offer more diverse programs than ever before, and church leaders must deal with increasingly complex issues. Pastors, too, are challenged by greater demands on their time and increasing stress levels. "Technology (the cell phone, e-mail, Internet and answering machines) makes it increasingly difficult for pastors to distance themselves from a constant stream of interruptions," stated the proposal submitted to the Lilly Endowment by the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), a proposal that resulted in a $2 million grant over five years to fund an initiative for "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence." This funding makes it possible to provide opportunities for pastors to engage in small peer learning groups, mentoring programs and continuing education.

Underlying the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative is the foundational belief that dealing with the challenges of church leadership today calls for strong, healthy pastors. But a strong, healthy pastor cannot become or remain so without working in concert with a strong, healthy council in the congregation. To sustain pastoral excellence, churches need to ensure that their pastor is not working in isolation but rather as part of a supportive, effective and active leadership team.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller

Common sense tells us that people can accomplish more by working together than they can by working apart. Many workplaces today view team-building as an essential step toward achieving corporate success. In the church, too, teamwork plays a critical role – though the evaluation of effective teamwork in an ecclesiastical setting may focus less on "success" and more on the extent to which a congregation follows God's leading.

Effective teamwork involves a pastor who is willing to work as a member of a team, sharing the load with other leaders in the church, participating in joint decision-making and encouraging mutual planning rather than approaching all tasks individually. Shared plans and goals mean shared responsibility and contribute to healthy pastoring, reducing the isolation and stress caused by carrying burdens alone.

"Health does not mean that a leader is perfect in every way, or struggle-free, but health, to me, is a matter of being in balance," says Rev. Cecil VanNiejenhuis, pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, Edmonton, Alberta. "Health means knowing how to work as a member of the body, not as a substitute Messiah, or demigod."

However, developing effective teamwork in churches is not solely the pastor's responsibility. Councils must be willing not only to share decision-making and planning but also to ensure support for the pastor in carrying out programs and developing ministry. Teamwork must extend from visioning and planning to implementation and evaluation, covering the whole gamut of leadership functions in a congregation.

So how can pastors and councils work together to build a stronger team and contribute to pastoral health – and the health of the congregation as a whole?

Communicate openly

No team has ever worked effectively without effective communication. Pastors and councils who set aside time dedicated to communicating openly and honestly are clear about their expectations of each other, the congregation and their plans and goals for the church's future. Where good communication is concerned, practice makes perfect. Some councils set aside time for structured communication on a monthly basis at their meetings, others prefer to do it annually or semi-annually at retreats or conferences.

Establish plans and goals together in a mutual process

Working together to establish plans and goals is not a task that can be done once and then put aside for a number of years. It is a constant process of communicating, adapting, evaluating and – especially – learning.

"In my experience I have found out that most churches need to take several runs at a vision/planning process before it really takes hold," says Rev. Martin Contant, Regional Director with Christian Reformed Home Missions. He works with established congregations in western Canada who want to engage in visioning or planning. "Just doing a vision planning process once doesn't usually ensure enough traction to make a huge difference. Many churches make a good beginning, but they need to keep at it, keeping the ministry plan current."

Build in accountability systems

Accountability is also important for healthy teamwork and helps establish strong working relationships between pastors and councils. "Our default mode is to always revert back to what we know and what we have always done," says Rev. Contant. "We need to have our *collective feet* held to the fire, so we as leaders will do what we've said we would do, by God's help and blessings. I think it is good to have a person in council appointed who will 'ride point' on the vision and the goals, ensuring that the council, pastor, and other staff make decisions that are in line with established ministry plans and goals."

Follow up

Mutual review of outcomes is also essential to healthy working relationships between pastors and councils. A team cannot be effective unless it learns what has worked and what has not. Why go on repeating the same old mistakes? Without follow-up and review, this learning rarely takes place. Mutual review also leads to greater ownership of a program's success – or failure, offering a broader perspective for effective evaluation and increasing creative solutions for what can be improved to make a good program even better.

Celebrate together when goals are achieved

Just as councils and pastors must take shared responsibility for failed programs or plans, shared celebration of accomplishments is essential, too. "Celebration of what God accomplishes is critically important," says Rev. Contant. When people simply move on to the next task without pausing to celebrate what has already been accomplished, an important step toward building a strong leadership team is missed. Pastors and councils who celebrate God's blessings on their vision and plans are increasingly motivated to move on to even greater goals. This is also true for

Continued on page 16...

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Healthy Pastoring

...continued from p.15

the congregation. Taking the time to involve them in celebration of accomplished goals is especially valuable.

"We need to take frequent inventory of the blessings that God is giving us, and one way to do that is to celebrate and help people to see that God is truly at work among us," says Rev. Contant. "When goals are met, whether a financial one or a task accomplished, it is a good thing to recognize those and celebrate them. Such celebration helps us to see that the church is on the move and in step with the Spirit of God. It also makes people aware that there is a focus and a plan to what the congregation is doing together as they serve."

Working in teams is always better

Some worry that an emphasis on teamwork means that the pastor should abdicate leadership entirely. This is certainly not the case, says Rev. Contant, who notes that the terms of most council members are typically three years with one in three retiring in any given year. So pastors play a pivotal role on leadership teams. In addition to his or her expertise, skills and experience, the pastor ensures continuity and consistency so that visions and plans can be implemented despite changes in the makeup of the leadership team.

There is little doubt though, that pastors who work closely with a strong and supportive team are more effective in their work. "When a pastor and his or her leadership team work together to cast the vision and implement it through realistic, attainable goals, the overall leadership of the pastor and council becomes more effective," says Rev. Contant. "Working in teams is always better."

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A new name out of Australia

Getting Unstuck
Arlene Van Hove

The heat of the Australian sun was tempered by the shade of the Eucalyptus trees surrounding the deck of the home we are staying in at Terrigal, a small seaside town north of Sydney in Australia. A gentle breeze persistently ruffles the pages of *The Sydney Herald*, a local newspaper I am trying to read. Assertively I plunk my stoneware coffee cup on the corner of the paper so I can sit in peace. Noises of two Australian bush turkeys jumping from branch to branch in the trees behind me complement what is for me a quaint foreign summer day at this time of year.

The most popular video? Unfortunately, the moment we read a newspaper we come face to face with the messiness of life no matter how idyllic our external environment and this morning proves to be no exception as my eyes catch a column at the bottom of the page.

Here, the author Simon Castles writes that according to wordtrracker.com – which monitors what the world's internet users are typing in from minute to minute – it seems the most popular video over the December/January holiday was the grainy three-minute affair starring party girl Paris Hilton and her old boyfriend. For those who do not regularly read the newspaper, suffice it to say a few months back someone insidiously posted the video of the Hilton daughter having sexual relations with an old boyfriend on the internet. Now, according to wordtracker.com, millions have seen it and millions more will.

The author laments that, while our society worries about child pornography and about the ability of our teenagers to access hard-core sites, we do not talk enough about the reality of the pornographic culture. And while he admits to also having fallen under its spell from time to time, he is alarmed at the rising numbers of X-rated sites on the net, which he observes is conservatively put at 8 million and rising!

A new name for a new malady

I agree with Simon Castles when he writes we kid ourselves if we believe the porno culture will not exact a toll. He strongly believes pornography takes its pound of flesh just as it gives it. He reminds us we are all diminished and become deadened by the constant barrage of sexual imagery – not just from hard-core sources, but also from advertising and media industries, which become more suggestive every day.

He writes sexual imagery chips away at us, as transitory thrills give way to something more depressingly permanent. Something that really should have a name – like *Perversion Fatigue.*

He acknowledges there is nothing "modern" or "cool" about saying this. Yet, here it is.

He questions what it is doing to the male-female relationship, wondering about the crushing pressures and expectations it puts on women. He has personal knowledge of the resentment women feel about this industry.

He also wonders about men. How do they view the female gender when from boyhood onward they have been bombarded with graphic and unrealistic images of women doing graphic and unrealistic things. He asks, would something as innocent and good as a simple kiss from the girl down the street have an effect on them?

He ends his column by questioning whether both men and women are victims of our porn culture, yet in different ways. He writes, however, that the signs as we enter a new year are not promising. Loneliness, he reminds us, is endemic. Millions of the world's women are single and unhappy. And millions of men are too busy downloading a clip of Paris Hilton to want to do much about it. He thinks it is time we at least start talking about the issue. And I agree with him.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

Germany opens first centre to train Islamic religious education teachers

Frauke Brauns

Bielefeld, Germany (ENI) — Germany's first university center to train teachers in Islam for religious education at schools has been officially opened.

The opening of the Center for Religious Studies at the University of Muenster in northwestern Germany comes amid debate in the country as to whether Islam should be taught in public schools alongside Christianity and Judaism.

"Despite outstanding legal issues, the University of Muenster believes that it is an important task to provide the basis for training public school teachers of Islam in terms both of content and of personnel," said Professor Ulrich Pfister, the university's vice-chancellor, at the opening celebrations in December.

Officially recognized religious bodies such as Germany's main Protestant and Roman Catholic churches have the right in most parts of the country to offer religious education classes at public schools. While churches provide teachers and draw up the curriculum, the schools provide rooms and fit the lessons into the timetable. But it is still uncertain if and when Islam will be taught in schools.

The administrative court of the state of North Rhine-Westfalia, where Muenster is located, recently ruled that existing Muslim umbrella organizations had no right to offer religious education in schools since they were primarily political rather than religious bodies.

The first students at the new religious studies center are scheduled to arrive later this year.

"There has been huge interest," the centre's Lamya Kaddor told the German television station WDR. "I keep on getting telephone calls from people who are interested in the course."

The center will also train religious education teachers in Orthodox Christianity and in Judaism, and offer seminars on inter-religious and inter-cultural issues.

The Council of Muslims in Germany says there are 3.3 million Muslims in the Germany, of whom two-thirds are of Turkish origin. Others are of Albanian, Bosnian, Yugoslav, Moroccan, Iranian or Pakistani origin.

Opinion

Yes . . . but

Bert Hielema

The virtues of coffee-drinking; the vices of gas-guzzling

This time it is a good-news/bad-news column. I'll start with the good news, if you don't mind, a sort of Coffee-Klatsch.

In early September 1951 I bought my first cup of coffee in Canada. My farmer-sponsor, where I had arrived on July 4 1951, had not much work for me for the winter and offered to let me stay at a reduced rate of $50.00 per month plus room and board, but I decided that I could do better elsewhere and traveled by bus from Strathroy to Stoney Creek, a suburb of Hamilton where former neighbors from my hometown, Groningen, lived. The bus had a stopover in Paris, the White Horse restaurant, and there I had a cup of coffee for 10 cents and a piece of pie for 15 cents. Wages were low, but so were prices. Within a day I had a job in a feed mill in Grimsby at 50 cents an hour, working 58 hours per week. So, my take-home pay was $29.00 per week, of which I paid $12.50 in room and board, leaving me a net of about $70.00 per month, not a great improvement, I now realize.

Now coffee is $1.00 at Tim Horton and a bit more at Starbucks: a tenfold increase in 50 years. Minimum wage has advanced a bit more to $6.85 I believe, about 14 times as much. But then who works 58 hours per week!

For years this so popular drink was seen as bad for your health. But, as with so many food and drink items, new discoveries are made, usually more bad than good. So rejoice, for now coffee is almost a health drink. If you drink enough of it, coffee may lower the risk of diabetes, but you have to keep a cup full at hand all day – at least 6 of them are needed to reduce the risk of that dreaded disease by 50 percent in men and 30 percent in women. The disadvantage is, at least for me that coffee speeds through my system in the most direct way from mouth to bladder.

But reducing the risk of diabetes is not the only benefit. Earlier studies have shown that drinking that cup of joe, may lower your risk of colon cancer by up to 25 percent, because of its ability to help keep you regular. Further studies have shown that regular coffee intake reduces the risk of developing kidney stones. After all, coffee is mostly water. People with asthma – a growing threat everywhere – who drink coffee can have up to 25 percent fewer symptoms because one of the compounds in coffee – theophylline – acts as a bronchodilator, widening the air passages in the lungs.

There is more: coffee may help prevent cirrhosis of the liver – if you are hooked on Baileys, use it in coffee – Parkinson's disease, skin cancer and gallstones. So, people, drink coffee and live longer.

And then there is the newest discovery, a most unusual one I might add. In Scotland, at the Aberdeen Fertility centre, researchers are worried about a 29 percent drop in the average sperm concentration in more than 7,500 men tested there from 1989 to 2002 . Apparently our modern society is not very good for siring children: the toxic effects of pesticides and other chemicals, drink, smoking, obesity, and tight underpants and trouser – all have played havoc with the sperm count.

A partial solution is found in coffee! A recent study in Brazil, the world's leading coffee producer, suggests that regular coffee intake might perk up male fertility by making sperm swim faster. That all important male thing suddenly takes on speed fired on by caffeine and penetrates that all important female egg with greater velocity and so enhances conception.

So, when you make your next trip to Tim Hortons or Starbucks, be aware that there are definitely grounds for celebration on the coffee scene. But – no column of mine without a 'but' – it can interfere with sleep and make some people edgy.

What kind of coffee? We buy it in Toronto at the Moonbean in the Kensington Market, where their passion is coffee and their commitment is to excellence. Our youngest son lives within walking distance from this colorful section of downtown Toronto, where we buy the organic, shade-grown kind. I have a pound of it in front of me: the delicious aroma of Colombia – roasted on the spot when we were there – has inspired me to write this column.

My wife and I, careful and moderate people that we are, have only one cup of coffee each day: at 2 in the afternoon. But that is a veritable ritual by now. And why not: not only is it a pleasurable experience, it also is one of the best preventive medicines.

By the way, my Moonbean bag says that coffee came to North America via New Amsterdam in 1660. So, give credit to the Dutch.

And now for the not-so-good news.

I guess by now you have discovered that your natural gas bill is higher this year. Again. I have propane and when I checked the cost of my last fill-up I noticed that I paid almost 84 cents per litre, about double what I paid a few years ago.

I saw this price hike coming, and so bought a new wood stove and had it professionally installed, together with a lining in my masonry chimney. I expect that it will pay for itself in two years. Fortunately I have access to lots of wood, of which Thoreau has said that it warms you twice: when you get it and when you burn it.

The beauty of this stove is that it warms the entire house, except our 4 bedrooms, without the aid of electricity. Thus no matter what happens to the public utilities, at least our house stays warm.

Electricity is increasingly an iffy item for most Canadians. It is my understanding that natural gas cost has jumped because we have reached its peak production. Here too no sliding back to comfortable price levels, and with it, in a few years, we will see the cost of our 'hydro' jump, which will prove hard to take for many of the lower wage earners.

Let me elaborate. The reigning Ontario Liberal Party, soon to be renamed the Fiberal Party, as it has broken more promises in a shorter time than any of the previous governments, promised to fade out the coal-fired electricity generating stations by 2007, in a short three years. Presumably replacing them with natural gas, which burns more cleanly, though it still produces CO2.

In the North America grid, of which we are part, 17 percent of the gas extracted is used to generate electricity. In 2001 there were 16,000 new gas wells drilled, up nearly 60 percent from 10,400 drilled in 1999. But output rose only about 2 percent in that same period. A May 31, 2002 article by Jeffrey Jones for Reuters, entitled "Canada faces struggle pumping more Natgas to US," begins ominously: "Canadian natural gas production may have reached plateau just as the country's role as supplier to the United States is becoming more critical due to declining US gas output and rising demand."

The increasing demand for gas is coming largely from an increasing demand for electricity and new housing. While supply has increased by 1%, the demand has been triple that number. To meet growing electricity needs, North American utilities in 2000-2001 ordered 180,000 megawatts of gas-fired power plants to be installed by 2005, one short year away. At the time, 4 years ago, it seemed the cheapest and cleanest way to convert fossil fuel into electricity. Apparently nobody bothered to inquire whether there would be enough gas available to fire all of those new generators over their useful life time. Now, with the price of natural gas sky-rocketing, many of these new gas-fired plants have been canceled or delayed.

Even now with so much demand for natural gas, there are already signs that the rates of extraction in North America will soon start on a downhill slope and with it the promises of the McGuinty government to phase out the coal-fired plants.

There is a Saudi saying: "My father rode a camel. I drive a car. My son flies a jet airline. His son will ride a camel." That is in accord with what Mike Bowlin, chairman and CEO, ARCO, now part of British Petroleum (BP) said in 1999: " We've embarked on the beginning of the last days of the age of oil."

Last week an article in the *Globe and Mail* caught my attention. It started with the revealing line: "Royal Dutch/Shell stunned the markets saying that it has significantly overestimated its proved global oil and natural gas reserves. In a statement the world's third biggest oil company in terms of production said it would trim its reserves by a fifth, from 19.5 billion barrels of oil equivalent to 15.6.... Shell's move cuts its reserve life to 10.6 years from 13.4 years."

Shell is known for its forward looking policies. It has a unit specially charged with projection conditions 10-20 years ahead. Shell has acknowledged something very important for us: reserves are falling and consumption is rising, something which bodes ill for the entire petroleum industry and society in general. The real question is whether we have entered the last decade of plenty of oil.

Perhaps we all should plan for that and start conserving, insulating, buying a fuel-efficient car, bike more, walk more, eat less, grow your own food. All little things which, in the aggregate, add up to significant savings.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ontario.

HOLLAND CHRISTIAN HOMES

Room number corrections re: Christmas issue

Christian Courier apologies for any inconvenience caused by the mixup.

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Mrs. Berendina Eggengoor	CT 408	Mrs. & Mr. Rie & Dirk Jongkind	HT 714
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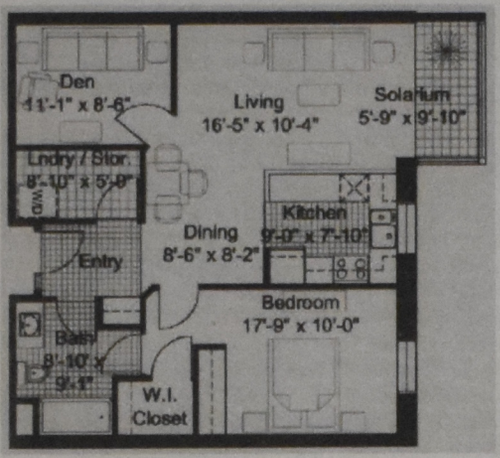

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–Psalm 90:1

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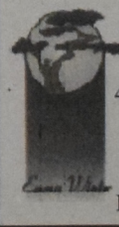

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Birthdays

Aaltje (Alice) Kuperus

With thanks to God, we hope to celebrate the **100th Birthday** of our Mother, Beppe, Oer-Beppe on February 13/04.

We invite friends and family to come to an **Open House** to congratulate her on Feb. 14 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the CRC Fellowship Hall, Clinton, Ont.

Home: Unit B Huron View RR 5 Clinton ON N0M 1L0

February 16, 1914 – Meerkerk

With thankfulness to God for his faithfulness, we celebrate the **90th Birthday** of our husband, father, grandfather & great-grandfather

Dirk Jongkind

With Love and best wishes:
Spouse: **Rie**
Nenke; Jake & Marion; Ernie & Adriana; Adam & Judy; Scott & Tammy; Judy & Alan
Grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Come celebrate with us at an **Open House,** Saturday, Feb.14, 2004 2-4 p.m. at Harmony Hall, Holland Christian Homes 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S.

Home address: Dirk & Rie Jongkind HT 714 - 7900 McLaughlin Rd S Brampton ON L6Y 5A7

Ida Johanne DeJong
(nee Penning)

will celebrate her **100th Birthday** D.V. on Feb. 10, 2004. Her precious husband died on May 14, 1986.

Thank you, Mom, for your unique model of Christian love, faithfulness, kindness, and generosity. We love YOU and are so grateful for your daily love, prayers and interest in our lives, especially of our spiritual destiny.

Your family:
Tena (John) Geerts
Jacob (Hazel)
Marge (Peter †-2004) de Vries
Helen (John) Cappon
Wynne (Gerald) Vandezande
Jess (†-1997) (Tom–Sally) Posthumus
Betty (Peter) Mostert
Mary (Sy) Wassenaar
Allan (†-1992) (Elaine)
Willa (Henry) Westendorp
Ida (Henry) Lunshof
Nancy (Gerrit) de Boer
Lillian (John †-1999) Buesink
66 grandchildren, including spouses († Edwin, † Dean)
49 great-grandchildren (& counting)

Open House at Sarnia Christian School (Pontiac & Exmouth) on Sunday, Feb. 8, 2004 from 3-5 p.m.

Ida lives at 753 Elizabeth Ave Sarnia ON N7S 2V4

Obituaries

Content in knowing God and Savior, Jesus Christ

ARIE JOHANNES KLEIN

in his 84th year, graduated to eternal life on Jan 19, 2004.

Loving him through this final battle were his wife Johanna, children; Jerry Klein, Nell & Fred Owen, John & Janet Klein; also 10 grandchildren & 3 great-grandchildren

"...and so always
(through the eternity of eternities)
we shall be with the Lord."
1 Thess. 4:17

Correspondence:22 Bishop Tonnos Way Hamilton ON L9B 2L7

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Psalm 23:1

DIRK VAN ROOYEN

of Forest, Ontario, formerly of Chatham, went home to be with his Lord, on Monday, January 5, 2004, in his 97th year. Predeceased by his wife Martha (Timmer) in 1993.

He is remembered as a caring husband and father by his children:
Henk & Gonnie of *Beamsville*
Dina & Simon Dreise of *Chatham*
Martin & Grace of *Forest*
Adrian & Margaret of *London*
Alice & Bertus Schreiber of *Ottawa*
Martha & Albert Luth of *Dresden*
Dick, deceased, Elizabeth & Fred Webley, *St. Marys*
Weigert & Hielkje* both deceased
William & Margaret of *Ripley*
Bert & Tinie of *Forest*
Francis & Connie of *Woodstock*
Two children deceased as infants, Letta and a baby boy.
* Hielkje deceased as Hielkje Vanderheide, wife of Sidney.
Also survived by: 54 grandchildren (one granddaughter deceased)
145 great-grandchildren and
5 great-great-grandchildren
Two sisters, Janna and Hennie in *The Netherlands*.

Funeral services were held on January 8, 2004, in First Christian Reformed Church Chatham, Rev. Paul Stadt officiating. Interment, Maple Leaf Cem., Chatham

Correspondence: Dina Dreise 212 Valley Rd, Chatham ON N7L 5L2

October 9, 1931 Tynje, Friesland — January 7, 2004 Sarnia, Ont.

FRANCES (Froukje) HUIZINGA

The Lord in his infinite wisdom took to be with himself our dear wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother at the age of 72. She was the faithful and precious wife of Bart Huizinga for 51 years and an excellent mother for:

Pat & Rene Mensinga, *Petrolia*
Betty & Arnie Wildschut, *Sarnia*
Grace & Bert VanHarten, *Mt. Forest*
John & Jane Huizinga, *Mt. Hope*
Ralph & Patty Huizinga, *Sarnia*

The Lord also blessed Frances with 19 grandchildren & 3 great-grandchildren.

2 Timothy 4:7-8
"I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith."

Mailing, email address: Bart Huizinga 1071 Jordan Dr, Sarnia ON N7S 1Y3 huizinga@rivernet.net

April 16, 1916 — January 1, 2004

SIPKE (Sidney) VELDSTRA

The Lord took home our father grandfather and great-grandfather on January 1, 2004 in his 88th year.

Beloved husband of the late Hilda (nee Gort) Veldstra
Dear father of:
Richard & Jetty Veldstra, *London*
Maria & Allen Smedes, *Kingston*
Harry Veldstra, *Hamilton*
Marsha Boer, *Burlington*
Loved Opa of 13 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren
Brother of John & Shirley Veldstra
Itske & Nellie Veldstra
Brother-in-law of Jane Veldstra
Predeceased by a brother Albert, sister Tine, brother-in-law George, & daughter-in-law Johanna

Correspondence: Richard Veldstra 47 Moffat Cres, London ON N5W 5X2

March 30, 1931 - January 31, 2003
Surhuisterveen FR - St. Thomas ON

Our hearts were broken when the Lord suddenly called home his beloved child, our dear husband, father & Pake

RAY KIELSTRA

in his 73rd year.
A service of Christian love and hope was held in the First CRC of St. Thomas Ont. on January 3, 2004.

He was a devoted and loving husband to his wife Jean (Sien Hoogstra) of 47 years.
Dad and Pake will be sadly missed by:
Clare & Rose Kielstra, *St.Thomas ON*
Ray, Natalie, Timothy
Janie & Jake Arends, *Alymer ON*
Joe & Linda (fiancee), James, John, Jeff
Peter & Judy Kielstra, *St.Thomas ON*
David, Brian, Wendy

"As the deer pants for streams of water so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Psalm 42:1,2

Correspondence to: Jean Kielstra 230 Sunset Dr, St Thomas ON N5R 3C3

"The Lord is my shepherd..."

On January 5, 2004, the Lord took home our dear wife, mom, oma, sister and friend

JESSIE DE JONG

at the age of 85 years.
Her life was characterized by tender love and compassion.

She will be lovingly remembered and missed by her husband Foppe (Paul) De Jong Woodingford Lodge, *Woodstock*

Children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:

Jessie & Al Schut, *Edmonton*
Kevin, Kristin and Karina; Steven; Jonathan, Emma and Aya; Danielle

Sue & Bob Pallister, *Bothwell*
Gini, Scott, Allyssa and Matthew; Greg, Cindy, Jeffrey and Bradley; Jamie, Deb and Gabriel.

Fran & Don Ross, *Edmonton*
Connor and Liam.

Dear sister to:
Freda & Rolph Wesselson and Ann & Andy Luth, *Woodstock* and 5 surviving siblings, *The Neth.*

Correspondence may be sent to: j.schut@shaw.ca. or J. Schut 14615 -84 Ave, Edmonton AB T5R 3X1

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1959 Woodstock, Feb. 13 2004

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(nee Dykstra)

With thankfulness to God

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Jonathan & Jen, Jacob, Charlene & Gerry, Derek
Peter & Diana Slager, *Hickson ON*
Melissa & John, Scott & Juli.–Tyler, Amanda, Stephanie
Harry & Tammy Slager, *Hickson ON*
Matthew & Candice, Ashley
Marlene & Mike Bloxsidge, *Woodstock*
Tony, Kevin & Melissa
Donny & Kim Slager, *Woodstock ON*
Courtney, Kayla, Kyle, Colton, Christopher
Hilda & Roy McDonald, *Woodstock ON*
Dylan, Sarah
Lori & Robert Wubs, *Woodstock ON*
Jordan, Brandon

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Met vriendelijke groeten

Obituary

Beilen, The Neth. Jan. 8, 1914 — Strathroy, Ont. Jan. 16, 2004

"We fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Cor.4:18

On January 16, our dearly loved mother, oma, great & great-great-oma

JANTJE TAMMING-KLINKER
(nee Bos)

went to be with her Lord, to be with him in eternal glory which had already been entered by her
husband Bouwe W. Klinker (1962)
husband John Tamming (1993)
daughter Alice Klinker (1956) and
grandson Mark Eelkema (2000).

She will be lovingly remembered by her children and their families:
Harry & Riek Klinker, *Georgetown*
Rennie & John Feddema, *Strathroy*
Don & Linda Klinker, *Strathroy*
Effie & Menno Eelkema, *Listowel*
Jack Klinker, *Surrey BC*
Also dearly remembered by her step-children and their families:
John & Froukje Tamming, *Strathroy*
Ralph & Tine Tamming, *Strathroy*
Martin & Nellie Tamming, *Strathroy*
Jim & Barb Tamming, *Strathroy*
Albert & Martha Tamming, *Strathroy*
Johan & Hilda Tamming, *Orangeville*
George Tamming, *Amsterdam NL*
Ryna & John Wilms, *Lindsay*
Special aunt of Riek & Henk Meyerink and many more nieces & nephews in Canada and the Netherlands.
Cherished sister and sister-in-law of
Mrs. Elly Boersema, *Strathroy*
Mr. Al (Luut) Haan, *Strathroy*
Ida & John Hoeksema, *Watford*
Mrs. Sientje Bos, *Hamilton*
Ralph & Jacoba Bos, *Strathroy*

The funeral service was held January 19 at Westmount Christian Reformed Church, Strathroy Ont. with Rev. Fred Vander Berg officiating.

Correspondence: Mrs. Rennie Feddema RR #2 - 5864 Inadale Drive Strathroy ON N7G 3R4

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DIRECTOR of OPERATIONS

Pacific Christian School (PCS) is a well-established, dynamic and thriving, interdenominational Christian school system of more than 900 students in Pre-School through Grade 12. PCS has a staff of more than 100 employees. The school draws its enrollment from 90 different churches representing 20 denominations in the greater Victoria area.

The **Director of Operations** reports to the Victoria Christian Education Society (VCES) Board and is part of a senior management team that includes the administrators of the secondary and elementary schools. The Director is responsible for analyzing and reporting on VCES's financial performance to the Board, and for leading the preparation of the annual budget. The Director has a key leadership role in the stewardship of the VCES financial resources, and in the achievement of compliance with Board policies. The Director is responsible for other non-academic administrative functions of the VCES.

Qualifications:

- College or university degree: emphasis in finance or business administration (or equivalent education and related experience).
- Extensive experience (minimum 5 years) in budgeting, policy analysis/development, and financial reporting/analysis.
- Business experience in a school environment is a definite asset.

A detailed job description and full qualifications are available upon request. Salary and benefits will be commensurate with appropriate training and relevant experience, and is based on the administrative salary grid. Suitably qualified, Christian applicants are invited to apply *by March 3, 2004*. Ideally, the successful applicant would commence duties by May 2004, to allow time for in-service training and orientation with the current **Director of Operations**. Please forward your letter of application, resume, references, and pastor's reference and/or Christian statement of faith to: Jack Taekema, Chair of the Director of Operations Search Committee, 671 Agnes Street, Victoria BC V8Z 2E7.

Direct enquires to:
Bill Helmus, Elementary Principal
Pacific Christian School
671 Agnes St. Victoria, BC V8Z 2E7
Phone: (250) 479-9365 Fax: (250) 479-3685
Email: bhelmus@pacificchristian.ca **Website: www.pacificchristian.ca**

Dordt College
Faculty Positions - August 2004

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

Criminal Justice – Develop and teach in an interdisciplinary criminal justice program. Qualified applicants should have a background in criminal justice, criminology, sociology, or related field.
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Health, Physical Education, Recreation (HPER) – Teach a variety of HPER major and activity courses and coaching duties yet to be determined.
History (possible opening) – Teach general education (including a non-western course) and upper-level courses
Psychology – Teach introductory psychology and upper level courses in the area of counseling psychology.
Social Work – Generalist; micro-practice background; methods courses and field practice.
Spanish –Teach elementary, intermediate, and upper level courses in Spanish language, literature, and culture.

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College, 498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center IA 51250-1697
Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu

Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs

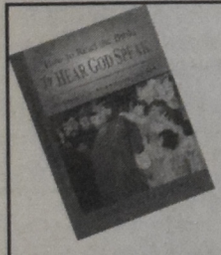
Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

Financial Aid

Members of Classis Niagara who will be graduate students studying **for full-time ministry in the CRC** and are in need of financial aid for the 2004-2005 academic year are invited to request an application from the Classis Niagara Student Fund Committee secretary,

Robert Loerts,
919 Church Street, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0,
phone (905)892-7745,
e-mail rloerts@hotmail.com.

Students presently receiving aid and continuing their studies must re-apply. **Application deadline is March 15, 2004.**



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Christian University Education
PRESIDENT

The King's University College, a Christian undergraduate university in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, has initiated a search for its third President. This person of faith, vision and commitment will lead the institution into the next exciting phase of its development. The Board of Governors, through its Presidential Search Committee, seeks candidates who have a bold, biblically-shaped vision for life, who demonstrate outstanding academic leadership with the ability to foster and build on existing traditions, and who show a proven capacity for passionately promoting the institution to a variety of audiences, enhancing its prominence, visibility and financial resources.

Distinguished by its commitment to university education and research as agents of positive social transformation, the University College is devoted to an interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates faith, teaching, learning and scholarship. Faculty are highly qualified, dedicated Christians committed to academic excellence and bringing a distinctly Christian perspective into the classroom.

Founded in 1979, The King's University College currently enrols more than 650 students, employs 80 full-time faculty and staff, and has an annual operating budget of $8.8 million. A member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, King's offers fully accredited three- and four- year Bachelor degrees in the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, commerce and theology, as well as a two-year Bachelor of Education after-degree. The urban campus, spanning eight hectares, is poised for a facility expansion that will accommodate up to 1000 students. For more details on The King's University College please visit www.kingsu.ca.

The Search Committee will begin consideration of candidates in March 2004, and is seeking a highly qualified individual who can take office in the summer of 2005. Requests for information, expressions of interest, nominations, or suggestions of suitable candidates are invited. Applicants may direct a curriculum vitae, a letter of introduction and the names of three references to:

Mr. John Kamphof, Chair, Search Committee and Chair, Board of Governors
c/o The King's University College,
9125 – 50 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6B 2H3
Fax: 780-465-3534; Email: john.kamphof@kingsu.ca

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is first directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

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For more information, see our website (www.eacrc.org) or contact

James D. Bratt, Chair, EACRC Search Committee, 2321 Everest SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507 (jbratt@calvin.edu; 616/526-6198)

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Art Capelle
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Ph: 519-337-4660 or email: artc@rivernet.net

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Mrs. Raili Paulusma, by email: paulusme@tbaytel.net or by telephone (807) 768-8771
or check our web-site at: www.baynet.net/~bethcrc/ .

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William Van Dyke, Principal
Maranatha Christian Academy, 939 Northwood St., Windsor ON N9E 2B4
Ph: 519-966-7424 Fax: 519-966-9519 Email: principal@maranathachristian.ca
Website: www.maranathachristian.ca

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Peter Bulthuis: pbulthuis@yahoo.ca
Box 31001, Molson Park Postal Outlet, Barrie, ON, L4N 0B3

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will need a Grade 6 teacher for a maternity leave effective April 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005. Continued employment as a teacher at JDCS after this leave is completed is a distinct possibility. A strength in teaching Science will be an asset. JDCS has a teaching staff of eleven and a total of 189 students. Qualified teachers may submit their letters of application or request more information contacting:

Mr. Garry Glasbergen, Principal
Jarvis District Christian School,
PO Box 520, Jarvis ON N0A 1J0
Phone: 519-587-4444 (school) 905-765-7919 (home) Fax: 519-587-2985
Email: jdcs@kwic.com
website: www.jdcs.ca

TABER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

is inviting applications for a Junior High float teaching position beginning on April 19, 2004 and likely extended for 2004-2005 school year. Taber Christian School is operated by the Society of Christian Education of Southern Alberta.

Committed Christian teachers are asked to send a resume and a Statement of Faith to:

Mrs.Marilyn Visser, Principal
4809 60 Avenue,
Taber, Alberta T1G 1E9
403-223-4550
fax 403-223-4693
principal@ta.monarch.net

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For more information please check the jobs page on our web site www.tdchristian.ca

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Looking for a job ad recently run in the Christian Courier? See our website: christiancourier.ca

Job ads run in the last three months are posted on the website with links to emails, etc.

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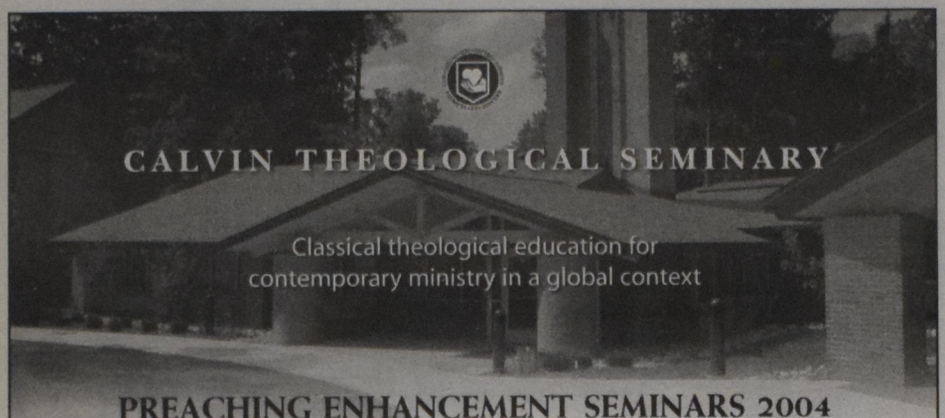

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A Pilot Program at Calvin Theological Seminary

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2004 Seminar Groups

July 6-10, 2004, and October 4-6, 2004, Denver, Colorado

"Preaching and Intergenerational Pastoral Care," led by **Howard Vanderwell**, Resource Development Specialist for Pastoral Leadership, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. This seminar is offered in conjunction with a Conference on Liturgy and Music (COLAM) entitled "The Church Together: Exploring Intergenerational Worship," featuring leaders such as Sally Morgenthaler, Gil Rendle, John Rottman, Keith Tanis, Moses Chung, and Ron Nydam, and sessions on preaching and related topics.

July 12-16, 2004, and October 11-13, 2004, Grand Rapids, Michigan

"Engaging with Science on Sunday," led by **Scott Hoezee**, Pastor of Calvin Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, author of *Proclaim the Wonder: Engaging Science on Sunday* (Baker Book House, 2003).

July 19-23, 2004, and October 18-20, 2004, Palos Heights, Illinois

"Effective Communication in Preaching," led by **Duane Kelderman**, Vice President for Administration and Professor of Preaching, Calvin Theological Seminary, **Sam Hamstra**, Pastor of Palos Heights Christian Reformed Church and **Annalee Ward**, Professor of Communication Arts, Trinity Christian College.

Initial application deadline is April 1, 2004.

For further details, application materials, and information about financial aid, visit *www.calvin.edu/worship/*.

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70TH ANNIVERSARY
SARNIA FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
May 15
dinner at 5:30 p.m.
(reservation needed);
7 p.m. program. at Sarnia Christian School.
May 16:
Celebratory Anniversary Worship Service
Contact firstcrc@xcelco.on.ca for more information, or call **519-336-8808**

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 10 **Annual Festival of Praise** by the **Christian Male Chorus** Association of South Western Ontario. 7:30 p.m. Centennial Hall, 550 Wellington St. **London**. Five choirs with over 200 men participating. Ticket: $13 (519)451-5484 or email: jettrick@sympatico.ca For information: (519)637-4357.

Apr.18, 24, 25 **Hebron CRC, Whitby,** Ontario, 50th anniversary celebrations. See ad next issue or phone 1-905-655-5020 or website www.hebroncrc.ca for more info.

Apr. 24 The MEN OF PRAISE (from Woodstock) in concert, at the Ebenezer CRC, **Jarvis** Ont., at 7:30 pm. Freewill offering.

May 2 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m Knox Presbyterian Church 55 Hincks St, **St. Thomas.** Freewill offering for Canadian Bible Society. (519)637-4357

May 15,16 **Sarnia** First Christian Reformed Church, 70th Anniversary. Contact firstcrc@xcelco.on.ca for more information, or call 519-336-8808 See ad this issue.

May 29 First Christian Reformed Church of **Montreal** will celebrate it's **50th anniversary**. Ph: 1-514-684-4430 or E-mail: georgelucy@aei.ca See ad this issue

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or toll free: **1 - 800 - 387 - 2421**
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Home tel: 905 - 824 - 5074

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Schoonoord Jubilee

Schoonoord viert in het jaar 2004 het 150 jarig bestaan. Dat gaat het hele dorp vieren van zaterdag 10 juli t.m zaterdag 17 juli. Op donderdag 15 juli zal er een reünie plaatsvinden voor Schoonoorders en oud-Schoonoorders die ook in Canada of Amerika wonen.

Wat is er mooier om deze week naar Schoonoord te komen met vakantie en dan tevens de oude bekenden de hand te drukken, en het glas te heffen op ons mooi dorp.

Het programma is nog niet definitief maar een foto expositie mag natuurlijk niet ontbreken. Dus heeft U nog oude foto's zend die dan voorzien van naam en adres zodat ze weer bij de rechtmatige eigenaar terug bezorgd kunnen worden. Aansluitend is er een revue in de grote feesttent.

Aanmelden en foto opsturen kan naar en bij: aardemaa@uwnet.nl
Arie Aardema
Slenerweg 44
7848 AJ Schoonoord

Retirement Announcement

The council and congregation of
Mountainview Christian Reformed Church of **Grimsby, Ontario**
praise God for His faithfulness to our pastor,

Jerry J. Hoytema and his wife, Winnie,
as they officially begin their retirement after 40 years of ministry.
May the Lord continue to bless them as they begin this part of life's journey.
All are welcome on **Sunday, February 8, 2004** during the 10a.m. worship service, as we will celebrate God's steadfast love. Reception to follow.

Correspondence may be directed to:
290 Main Street East, Grimsby, Ontario, Canada, L3M 1P8
Phone: 904-945-0004

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- or -
Jan Wubben - 390 Mill Street, Woodstock ON N4S 7V6
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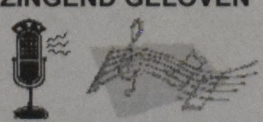

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Photo's & images of past and present would be appreciated.
Phone **1-514-684-4430** [7-10 p.m. EST]
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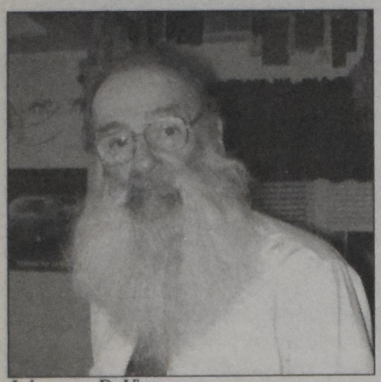
He's got gambling on his mind



Johannes DeViet

Sonya Vanderveen-Feddema

Most people read one or two, possibly three, newspapers daily. Johannes DeViet, 78, reads between 40 and 50. He's not reading that many because he's a senior with unlimited spare time on his hands. Rather, he reads them with a passionate goal in mind – to glean any information on gambling, its negative impact on Canadians, and the role governments play in promoting what he calls a huge "deception."

DeViet, a member of First London CRC, says that the deception at the root of what is called the gaming industry "began with semantics, with deceptive language."

He adds, "Proponents of gambling camouflage the true nature of gambling by calling it gaming, as if it belongs in the same category as basketball, soccer, or some simple and innocent board game. The word 'industry' seems to give gambling even more legitimacy. But when we think about it, we realize that gambling might be all sorts of things, but the term 'industry' does not apply. It goes against all normal usage of the word.

"Gambling produces nothing. We read of the many jobs it produces. But do we call cancer an industry because it produces jobs for physicians, technicians, and nurses?"

Grassroots social action

As a volunteer for Gambling Watch Network-Ontario (GWN-O) – a grassroots anti-gambling citizens' group formed in 1997 to oppose the Ontario government's plan to establish 44 charity casinos across the province and to promote Video Lottery Terminals in communities – DeViet abridges the gambling information that he finds in the media and publishes it in a weekly e-mail newsletter sent to more than 800 people in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S.A. He hopes his efforts will raise awareness about gambling's ill effects.

DeViet became an anti-gambling activist in 1997 when he learned that his hometown, London, Ont., was one of the Ontario government's proposed sites for a casino. Together with Art Tiesma, a socially active member of London's Good News CRC, he joined a group of like-minded people from diverse backgrounds. The largest segment of the group consisted of Christians from various denominations. Several Muslims also participated. Through their efforts, the govern-ment's proposal for a London-based casino was defeated.

During that period, DeViet and Tiesma attended meetings in Toronto where several small, anti-gambling groups had established the Ontario Coalition Against Gambling Expansion (OCAGE). The group, completely self-funded and consisting solely of volunteers, eventually changed its name to Gambling Watch Network-Ontario.

According to its website (www.gamblingwatch.ca), GWN-O's plan includes influencing the government to place a moratorium on gambling expansion pending:

1) independent studies on the social, economic, and legal impact of gambling,

2) a standard public consultation process,

3) local veto and regulatory authority,

4) public education and disclosure of the odds and risks of gambling,

5) government regulations and accountability, plus limits on gambling promotion.

Shortly after DeViet became involved in GWN-O's work, he was asked to volunteer as its central e-mail contact person. Besides sending out the weekly e-mail newsletter, he daily shares the gambling news he's garnered from the media with two other group members who do follow up work by writing letters or making phone calls in connection with what he has found. Also, he answers requests for information from reporters, addiction counselors, academics, and church members. He estimates that his volunteer position is equivalent to a 50 hour work-week.

"I never looked for any volunteer work," DeViet says. "It always just came my way. If I had whatever it took to do the job, I saw it as my calling. That's how I see this work, too. So, I'll do it as long as it's necessary, and I have the strength to do it."

Though most of GWN-O's members belong to the Christian church – for most of its existence the organization's spokesperson was an Anglican woman, the present spokesperson is a United Church minister, and another activist is a retired Salvation Army officer – DeViet doesn't call it a Christian organization. Years ago he suggested to a Pentecostal member of GWN-O that the group split up into two groups, one of which could be openly Christian. She strongly disagreed because, DeViet says, "the present general attitude is to be very tolerant of everything, but to be totally intolerant of anything that is, or even seems to be, Christian." Therefore, DeViet and other Christians work for God-glorifying change within a secular organization.

Though the organization can't accurately measure the impact they are having, still DeViet says, "Our presence, we believe, has made the Ontario government more careful in its approach to gambling matters. It is well known that we are watching what is going on."

In order to receive GWN-O's weekly newsletter or to learn more about the organization, please contact DeViet at jdeviet@skynet.ca.

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Royal Bank prime plus one percent
for instance, on January 1, 2004, Elim paid
5.5% p.a.
Call 604-583-3546 today - Ask for Jenny and Jake DeWeerd
The interest earned will fluctuate during the five-year term as the Royal Bank prime rate fluctuates and could pay up to 7% p.a. You will deposit your funds into a group RRSP at the Canadian Western Bank. The bank will buy a Bond that is registered against certain Elim real estate.
This is not to be construed as an offer to solicit investments and no investment can be made until the investor has received an Information Statement issued by Elim Housing Society.
Investments can be made without an RRSP
Shorter term investments are also available
About Us
Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Operated by Elim Housing Society, a non-profit organization, Elim Village is a unique Christian retirement community. When fully developed it will be home to some 700 seniors and will offer a wide variety of housing and care options. More than 125 independent living apartments and duplexes are now completed. Construction is currently underway on 111 supportive and assisted living apartments, with a completion date of late 2004. Future plans call for an Amenity Building, Nursing Care, and additional Apartments.

Elim Village
Christian Retirement Community
Visit our presentation centre! 9089 - 160 Street, Surrey, BC V4N 2X7
604-583-3546
www.elimvillage.com